

**Socio - Cultural Background  
of the  
Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community  
As Reflected in  
the Konkani Proverbs**



**SUKRTINDRA ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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KUTHAPADY, THAMMANAM, KOCHI-682 032, KERALA, INDIA.



# **Socio-Cultural Background of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community As Reflected in the Konkani Proverbs**

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**(English & Konkani)**

By  
**Dr. L. Suneetha Bai**

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## Foreword

This volume is intended to bring out the Socio-cultural aspects of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community as reflected in the selected Konkani Proverbs. Proverbs are considered as the most easily observed and collected genres of traditional expression. They have remained a part of the verbal resources of a culture. Collections of proverbs are repositories of wisdom.

Dr. Suneetha Bai has attempted to trace the Socio-cultural background of the G.S.B. Community by an analytical study of the Konkani Proverbs. The book will not only add to the material already available on the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community but also highlight the significance of Proverbs in tracing the background of a community.

We express our indebtedness to Sri. T.V. Mohandas Pai, Bangalore, for having generously offered financial assistance to bring out this edition.

Kochi - 32,  
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Dr. V. Nithyanantha Bhat  
Hon. Director



## Preface

Proverbs are one of the most important mediums for the transmission of thought, values and expectations. They convey beliefs and experiences of the users. These experiences are largely acquired from ancestors and are handed down to succeeding generations. The proverbs work under a socio-cultural conditioning. Like the other genres of folklore, proverbial literature also rises from society and is preserved in a particular environment and is modelled after cultural patterns. The proverbs of each community have their own characteristic peculiarities due to local historical traditions, socio-cultural settings, geographical and ecological factors and the interests of the group. Distinctiveness of each section is apparent in its typical associations of themes and particularly developed ideas. Traditions of a society correspond to its social life and thus proverbs also have their appeal limited to the particular social group. The Konkani speaking people include various communities such as the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins, Vaisyas, Kudumbis, Christians and Muslims. The present study is restricted to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community.

Saraswati is the patron deity of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Speech is Her principal manifestation. The scope and function of the Konkani language once called by

the name of Saraswati Balabhasha, is co-related to the ancient river Saraswati. Some of the proverbs of Konkani also refer to this ancient history. The language and social environment, no doubt, mould the intellectual process of the members of any community, and the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are not an exception to this. We get a picture of the thoughts which spring forth from the ancient Indian tradition, when we make a deep study of the Konkani proverbs.

Human personality always functions within the framework of certain socio-cultural setting and it cannot be evaluated in terms of or by the standards of another culture. This is true in the case of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture also. Saraswat Rishi established this social order on the banks of Saraswati long ago. In spite of the peregrinations of the Saraswats and influences of other cultures on their social structure, the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins still keep their original culture intact. The principal object of their culture is to promote serious thinking and a co-ordination between thought and action. They strongly believe in the tenet: मनसा वाचा कर्मणा धर्मया अनुसर्तव्य. Their's is an original culture, not a borrowed one. It is full of personal convictions and traditional teachings that strongly influence their life.

From time immemorial, they had their own convictions and we see in their culture today the revival of the ancient sentiments that will suit the modern conditions. The Saraswat view of life has not been affected by the present circumstances. It has been there all the time as a way of life.

The ancient culture of Aryavarta believed in a full life based on the recognition of the primacy of the spirit over the mind. The instinct of Dharma as a confluence of the laws of nature and the moral law and of yajna or altruistic self-discipline, was treated as the Dharma of the spirit. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins accepted and followed the Dharma of the human spirit. They were and are still the followers of this kind of Dharma. They strongly believe in the dictum of the *Mahabharata*, धारणाद् धर्मसित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः. When we speak of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture, we are bound to explain it in terms of Dharma. Dharma here is not directly connected with its religious aspect. By Dharma we mean the characteristic culture which is firmly under-pinned by a unique type of social structure. This socio-cultural complex has been described as Varnashrama Dharma which is clearly reflected in the Konkani proverbs. The distinctive feature of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture is its inclusiveness. This inclusiveness is characterised by Varnadharma. Unity in diversity understood in all its bearings is the keynote of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture.

Culture begins at home. Each human being embodies his culture irrespective of its nature, and embodies all of it. An average Gowda Saraswat Brahmin child receives a total impression of the culture from home. This is conveyed to him inarticulately by the way he is nurtured. This is well-expressed in the Konkani proverbs. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society has formulated these laws and regulations. They are rather in tune with the ancient Indian culture and tradition. The term 'culture' is to be examined from the

standpoint of religion and spirituality. Then only we get a picture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture under observation.

‘Cultural Background’ in the title suggests something given and fixed. What constitutes a community is the notion of voluntary sharing of ‘goods’, in the wider sense, the values. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strongly believed and still believe in the value system. Communities in the true sense are ‘culture pockets’ and the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are not an exception to this, culture being understood here as a total way of life. This way of life is well reflected in the Konkani proverbs.

The term ‘Gowda Saraswat Brahmin’ is not used here in terms of a particular sect or religion but it is interpreted in terms of “culture”, a way of life. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins from time immemorial followed the ancient Brahmanical culture, an intelligible and popular culture of ancient India, diversified yet integrated, whose uninterrupted continuity down the ages has shown its capacity to evolve without surrendering its master plan which is retained in the form of proverbial treasures.

The present work entitled *Socio-Cultural Background of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community As Reflected in the Konkani Proverbs* is divided into five chapters. The first chapter entitled “The Konkani Proverbs - An Overview” is a general study of proverbs with special reference to the Konkani proverbs. In the second chapter titled “Social Structure” a study of the various aspects of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society reflected in the

Konkani proverbs is aimed at. The third chapter entitled "Customs and Manners" is the continuation of the theme of the second chapter. The fourth chapter "Role of Dharma" deals with Dharma in its different aspects on the basis of the Konkani proverbs. The fifth and last chapter "Ethical Values" explains general ethics with special reference to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture. This chapter is followed by a conclusion.

My sincere thanks are due to all those who helped me in this venture especially our Director Dr. V. Nithyanantha Bhat, who took special interest in this work and offered creative suggestions.

Kochi - 32,  
15-9-2004

Dr. L. Suneetha Bai

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## Chapter - I

# The Konkani Proverbs - An Overview

Folklore may be said to be a true and direct expression of the mind of the primitive man. It perpetuates the pattern of culture. Through its study we can often explain the motifs and meaning of culture. Proverbs are an important part of the folklore, originating in folk tradition. They are a sure index to the early traditional culture of the people and are a very essential and integral element in the living culture. They are remnants of the ancient history and culture of any common folk preserved amidst very many destructions. They are fragments of wisdom and the earliest records of unwritten laws of morality. The proverbs of any language give a clear picture of the society related to that language. They also unfold before us many hidden historical facts relating to the society. The religious beliefs of a particular caste reflect in the proverbs connected with that caste. The Konkani language, more or less an outcome of the ancient Brahmanical culture in India has to its credit a number of proverbs which show a stamp and dignity of the culture of antiquity. They are figurative expressions, which in spite of having an ancient cultural background, are still true, and present a realistic picture of the society of the Konkani speaking people. Even the minute details regarding various beliefs, festivals, ceremonies etc. are recorded in their true form in this literature. The study of the proverbs of any

society is enough to understand the people in their original form along with the moral and ethical surroundings. These are expressions resulting from the experiences of life in a keen, quaint and lively fashion. The Konkani proverbs are not an exception to this rule. We have in these proverbs a profound understanding of the age-old experiences of the Konkani speaking people. For example -

अड्डण चोयल्यारि घरा लक्षण

(A look at the courtyard will tell you about the quality of the house.)

आदायु पोळोनु खर्चु करि

(Spend according to your income.)

अपणालो हातु अपणाले उश्याक

(One's hand for one's pillow.)

Many other proverbs of such category can be found. These proverbs reflect practical wisdom attained from life's experiences. Sometimes they express universal truths :

आयचो भिकमग्रि फायचो रायु

(Today's beggar is tomorrow's king.)

आजि अंसिल्लो फायि ना

(If one dies today, tomorrow is the second day.)

थळ्ळक्ळेवंचे सगग भंगार न्हयिं

(All that glitters is not gold.)

मीट खेल्लोलो उद्दाक पित्तोलो.

(One who eats salt will drink water.) etc.

From the linguistic point of view the proverbs of any language are no doubt a treasure since they present before

us the various changes of different ages during the development of a particular language. This is true in the case of the Konkani language also. The vocabulary used in these proverbs is enough to trace the gradual development of the language under study. The vocables आपण (आत्मन्); कोळ्सो (कलश); आयदन (आयतन); खंदो (स्कन्ध); etc. connected with Sanskrit vocables, घोवु (गोह); अव्ययि (अव्वा); खोंपि (खुपा); उरसे (उत्सय); पोट (पोट्ट); ओप (ओप्प); खोण्सां (खणुसा); काळ्यि (काहल्नी); etc. connected with the Desi words, throw some light on the gradual development of the Konkani language.

The Konkani proverbs are really a mine of precious gems. The following proverbs can be quoted as examples -

घोत्र घोड जात्यारीयि गोत्र व्होड जायत वे ?

(If the Dhoti is long, will the Gotra become great?)

गाडवाक घसिल्यारि घोडो जायत वे ?

(If you wash a donkey will it become a horse?)

धूं धूं अव्या रुक्का आजि मक्का फायि तुक्का

(O, mango tree, if today is for me, tomorrow is for you.)

नरकाक णव्व वाटो स्वर्गाक एकीयि

(There are nine ways to hell, but only one to heaven.)

निदेलेले माजर विंदराक धरीत वे ?

(How can a sleeping cat catch a rat?)

निरपराधि अस्सिल्याक भय ना

(The innocent is free from fear.)

These form a repository of popular ideas that serves as a constant source for formal literature and art. These are essentially of the people, for the people and by the people. These proverbs are not something far away from

us, but real and living among us. The figures of speech, symbols, and imagery peculiar to the people and to the language can be clearly seen in these proverbs. The genius, wit and spirit of life seen in these proverbs attract everybody towards these pithy sayings. Though these sayings are written in prose they are endowed with poetic melody and rhythm. Konkani is a language which is sweet, musical, and oriented with intonation. Change of accent is very common in Konkani. Existence of nasal sounds in abundance makes the language still more beautiful. When we analyse the proverbs, these peculiarities of the language project themselves. Brevity, sense and piquancy are prominent characteristics of these proverbs. For example -

फरकु घोड्याक हरकु लगामु

(A tight rein for a weak horse.)

फटियेक गेल्यारि कर्टे लाभु

(If you lie you will gain only a coconut shell, a mark of poverty.)

धावं धावं धावंचे तारीकडेन पावंचे

(Run, run and run and you will reach the ferry.)

जसो रुकु तशें फळ

(As the tree so the fruit.)

व्होक्कल मोरो व्होरेतु मोरो भट्टालि घडि तट्टांतु पोडो

(The bride and groom may go to hell, the priest's concern is only dakshina.)

कोंकोणो व्हानु मेल्लो शेणै खानु मेल्लो

(The Konkani man died of carrying burden and Shenoi died of eating.)

नवे नवे अंगार घेये परने परने उश्याक घेये

(The new cloth is for the body and the old one for the pillow.)

फुगयि फुगयि मजका पुगयि हांव तुगेलो व्होळ्ळो जावय

(Treat me well since I am your eldest son-in-law.)

The short sentences drawn from long experiences telling the truth of life in a beautiful and appealing style with melody and rhythm make the Konkani proverbs more beautiful than the proverbs of many other languages. It will not be out of context to refer the *Chambers Encyclopaedia of Universal Knowledge* which speaks of the proverbs as having prodigious amount of sound wisdom and good common sense, spirit of justice, prudential rules for every stage and work, poetical imagery, wit and satire and a thousand other qualities.

### Different Versions of the Konkani Proverbs

In Konkani there are a number of proverbs which present the same meaning in different versions. For example -

हांतुळा तकीत पाय पतलावंका (Strech your legs according to the bed.)

हांतुळा तकीत पाय निदुवुंका (do)

हांतणा तकीत पाय नीट कोरका (do)

हांतरुण पळौन पाय पतळावंचे (do)

अंथरुण बंधून पाय पसरुंचे (do)

अंथरुण पाहून पाय पसरावे (do)

मांद्रि पोळोळु पाय सोडिजै (Stretch your legs according to the mat.)

These proverbs show the different dialectical positions of the Konkani language. In some of them we can see Marathi words, in some other, Kannada terms are used. In spite of these differences, the message of all these proverbs is one and the same.

Another example may be cited-

सूण्या बाल नळियेंत घाले तरीकयि वांकडेचि (A dog's tail will not become straight even if it is put in a pipe.)

सूण्याची शेपडी नळियेंत घाली तरी वांकडी (do)

कुतरयाची शेपडी वांकडी ती वांकडी (do)

कुतरयाचे शेंपूट नळकांड्यांत घातले तरी वांकडे तें वांकडेचे (do)

सूण्याची शिस्टि नळियेंत घाल्यार नीट जायतगी ? (Will a dog's tail straighten if it is put in pipe?)

सूण्या बाल नळयेंत घाल्यार नीट जाता वे ? (do)

In Konkani the term used for the proverb is म्हण्णि which is originated from Sanskrit भण् = to say. This term in itself includes a wider meaning indicating different phases of society and its reflections in the metaphorical sense of these sayings. The Konkani proverbs are an outcome of a long tradition which are handed over from father to son as a legacy. Being a part of an oral tradition, these proverbs fundamentally remained in the memory of the common man transmitted from generation to generation. Hence many versions of one and the same proverb can be seen, as in:

- (1) एकु मेळ्यारि दोनि वेचु (You earn one but spend two.)  
एकु मेळ्यारि धा वेचु (You earn one but spend ten.)

(2) मंदो सानु जल्यारीयि खूर चारीचि (Even if the cot is small it will have four legs.)  
खटले रान जल्यारीयि खूर चारीचि (do)

(3) पोट भरलेले ब्राह्मणाक धयांतु फत्तोरु (The Brahmana with full stomach dislikes curds.)  
भरिल्या बाभणाक धंय करकरता (do)

(4) ताकाक येवूनु मडके निपयता (He wants buttermilk but hides the vessel.)  
ताकाक येवूनु बुड्कूलो निपयता (do)

(5) उट्ट्या हातान कयब्याक आंबुणा (He won't drive away even a crow with the hand smeared with remnants of food.)  
उट्टे हातान कावळो आमडिना (do)

### Metaphorical Sense of the Konkani Proverbs

Metaphorical sense is the main feature of a proverb and it is the strength of the Konkani proverb too. With the help of a metaphor the proverb explains a social reality without any frustration in the minds of the general public. It is the same quality which creates a number of proverbs giving the same sense of meaning. A number of examples can be cited from the Konkani proverbs -

काराते शक्रात घल्यारीयि कोळूयि

(The bitter gourd though soaked in sugar is bitter.)

कार या बी दुदांतु घल्यारीयि कोळूयि

(Nux vomica though put in milk remains bitter.)

कोळु दुदि गंगेत बुड्डेयत्यारि गोळु जाता वे ?

(Will the bitter pumpkin though dipped in the Ganges become sweet?)

निंबा रुकु अमृतान शिंपिल्यारीयि गोडु जायना

(Even if the Neem tree is watered with nectar, it will not become sweet.)

सर्पक दूध दिल्यारीयि वीष वोंकीता

(Even if you feed a serpent with milk it will emit poison.)

All the proverbs correspond to the same metaphorical meaning that an evil person cannot be reformed by means of repeated advice. The English proverb runs thus - Put a snake to your bosom and when it is warm it will sting you. Other examples are

दिव्वोडु वता म्होणु वोत्तांतुल्यान गयंडोळु गेल्यारि कोर्पूनु वोत्तोलो

(If the earthworm crawls in the sunlight as the snake does, it will be burnt.)

आक उड्डता म्होणु पाक उड्ल्यारि गोबरा राशीरि पडतले

(If the feathers fly in the air like the seeds of Calotropis, it is sure that they will come down.)

कायळो गोपरारि बेस्सोलो म्होणु गरुडु जायना

(Even if a crow sits on a temple tower, it won't become a Garuda.)

गाडवाक घसिल्यारि घोडो जायना

(Even if you wash a donkey, it won't become a horse.)

कायळो न्हल्यारि ढोंक जाता वे ?

(Will the crow become a crane if it takes a bath?)

**The Konkani Proverbs in Comparison with the Proverbs of other Languages**

Though the Konkani proverbs are the reflections of the age-old practices of a particular race i.e. the Konkani

speaking people, the psychological basis of cultural traits is identical among all races, and similar forms develop among them. As a result many similar proverbs can be seen in Konkani and other languages. For example -

आधो घटो घोषमुपैति नूनम् (Sanskrit)

अर्धे भरलोलो कोळ्यांतो हालयो चड (Konkani)

अधजल गगरी छलकत जाय (Hindi)

നീകുടം തുള്ളുംബുകയില്ല (Malayalam)

Empty vessels make much noise. (English)

All these proverbs from different languages carry the same sense i.e. An ignorant person always boasts. Another example is -

थळथळेयचें राग भंगार नह्य (Konkani)

चमकनेवाला सब सोना नहीं है (Hindi)

മിഞ്ഞാനത്തല്ലോ പൊന്തല്ല (Malayalam)

All that glitters is not gold (English)

This is enough to prove that folk mind is not the property of a particular caste or race. It is the common property of the human race. When we analyse the nature of man we find that there are similar traits found in human beings irrespective of caste and creed. Because of this, people who believe in different religions, customs and practices think of a common society viz. human society. The experiences of the members of the human society are more or less the same in every case. An analysis of the Konkani proverbs and a comparison with the proverbs of other languages will clear this fact. For example -

## [A]

- (1) अंबो वोयल्यारि चींच जायना (Konkani)  
(If you plant mango seed it won't produce tamarind fruits.)  
आम बोओ आम खाओ इमली बोओ इमली खाओ (Hindi)
- (2) अपणांगेलो दुड्डु कूडो जाल्यारि अंगडिकाराक उल्लोवंचाक नज्ज (Konkani)  
(If our coin is false, do not scold the shop-keeper.)  
अपना ही पैसा खोटा तो परखनेवाले का क्या दोष ? (Hindi)
- (3) अपणालें कार्य महाकार्य वेगव्यालें कज्जुब्बि (Konkani)  
(Own affairs are big and those of others are silly.)  
अपना मीठा अनकर तीत (Hindi)
- (4) अळस्याक बिक्कण्ड भाजि म्हळ्यारि हरवेंच गोड म्हणटा (Konkani)  
(If the lazy boy is asked to roast the jack-nuts, he will say that raw nuts are sweeter.)  
आलसी कुएं में गिरा, कहा कि यहां ही भले, अभी कौन उठेते ? (Hindi)
- (5) कायळे गोपराचेरि बेस्सोलो म्होणु गरुड जायना (Konkani)  
(Even if a crow sits on a temple tower it won't become a Garuda.)  
खाल ओढाये सिंह की स्यार सिंह न होय (Hindi)

## [B]

- (1) एक पैसेचो म्हालु व्हावंचाक दोनि पैसेचि कूलि (Konkani)  
(The goods are of one rupee and the wages are two rupees.)  
ചുണ്ടാ കാപ്പണം ചുമട്ടുകുളി മുകാപ്പണം (Malayalam)
- (2) कायळे न्हल्यारि ढोक जाता वे ? (Konkani)  
(Will a crow become a crane after wash ?)  
കാക്ക കുളിച്ചാൽ കൊക്കാകുമോ (Malayalam)

(3) कोळे वोऱ्हूनु कटियेरि पळ्यारीयि कटे वोच्चूनु केळीरि पळ्यारीयि नाशु केळीक (Konkani)

(If the plantain tree falls on a thorny bush, or a thorny bush falls on a plantain tree, the loss is for the plantain tree.)

ഇല മുള്ളേഞ്ഞ വീണാലും മുള്ളു ഇലമേൽ വീണാലും ഇലക്ക് തന്ന കെട. (Malayalam)

(4) ഗുല്ലേര ദിംബനു വാംഗണ ഘേതാ (Konkani)

(Receive a more harmful Brinjal in exchange for a less harmful Guler (of Brinjal family.)

ഒരുംഗം കൊടുത്തിട്ട് ഉമട്ടം വാങ്ങുക. (Malayalam)

(5) ഘരം നാ പേജ്ജക വാട ഭായര വത്നാ മിശിയേക തുപ (Konkani)

(Though there is no means for even gruel at home, moustache has a grand shape outside.)

അരിമണിയൊന്ന് കൊറിക്കാനില്ല, തതിവളയിട്ട് കിലുക്കാൻ മോഹം. (Malayalam)

[C]

(1) കരതൽത്തിൽ ചെറു ഉല്ലേശനാ ഉല്ലംഗ്യതൽത്തിൽ ചെറു കരനാ (Konkani)  
Great braggarts are little doers. (English)

(2) കർമ ധൂത്യാര പരിഹാര നാ (Konkani)  
(It will not be an atonement, if you wash your Karma.) (English)

(3) ഘരചേ മോഗരേക പോർക്കു നാ (Konkani)  
No prophet is honoured in his own country. (English)

(4) ധാ ജാണാലീ ആമാ കട്ടാരി (Konkani)  
Everybody's business is nobody's business. (English)

(5) ദുഡ്ദു അസ്സ ജാല്യാര ഗുഡ്ഡോ ഹല്ലോവയാത (Konkani)  
Money makes the mare go. (English)

## Classification of the Konkani Proverbs

Proverbs have a capacity to examine every nook and corner of human life. We can find a variety of subjects as a background for the creation of proverbs. As far as the Konkani proverbs are concerned they give a systematic picture of the day-to-day life of the Konkani people as a result of which each and every minute impulse in the life of an average Konkani speaking man is well recorded in these proverbs.

### For Example -

तीळु खानु व्रत भष्टलें

(Spoil the fast by eating gingely.)

तुग्गेले तारवारि मेग्गेलें अर्ध फण्ड

(Half of my arecanut is on your ship.)

तेण्डूळ्याक बी चडि मोटव्याक बुद्धि चड

(There are lots of seeds in the fruits of Brysnia Grandis and lot of wisdom in a fat man.)

ओक्कूनु गेल्लेले दूध कृष्णाक अर्पण

(The milk that overflows is supposed to be an offering to Lord Krishna)

कणावेल्यान सित्ता परीक्षा कमळावेल्यान उदका परीक्षा

(The quality of the boiled rice is tested by a single cooked grain and the quality of water is tested by the quality of the lotus.)

एक वयलांत दोनि उज्जे वच्चनात

(Two flames will not enter into a single air hole of the hearth.)

The surroundings of their life - animals, birds, trees and creepers, flowers and fruits, are correctly listed in these proverbs.

Examples -

गायचे वरारा लग्गि पळ्यार तण खाता, सूण्या पेट्या लग्गि पळ्यार गृ खाता

(One who lives in the company of a calf eats grass, one who lives in the company of a puppy eats faeces.)

हास्ते लक्खनु वत्ता मुंबरावे लेक करता

(The elephant passes conveniently, but the passing of a mosquito is restricted.)

गरसोरि मारूनु विदराक धावंडायता

(The rat is driven away by beating on the winnowing basket.)

कायळो नळ्यारि ढोक जाता वे ?

(Will a crow become a crane after a wash?)

कायळ्याक तांगेलि पिल्लां चंदां

(For a crow, its little ones are beautiful.)

कायळ्यान हागनातिल्ले झाड ना सूण्यान मुर्तिल्लो खूंट ना

(There is no bush on which the crow doesn't excrete and there is no stake on which the dog does not urinate.)

करडीक भीनतिल्लो कंबळीक भित्ता वे ?

(If one does not fear a bear, how can he fear a woolen blanket ?)

अबो वोयळ्यारि पोणोसु जाता वे ?

(If we plant a mango tree will it produce a jack fruit?)

घरचे मोगरेक पोर्मोळु ना

(The jasmine flowers of one's own house have no fragrance.)

If we classify the Konkani proverbs on the basis of the subject matter, we can have the following categories -

- 1) Proverbs related to the society.
- 2) Proverbs related to religion and philosophy.
- 3) Proverbs related to morals and ethics.
- 4) Proverbs connected with birds and animals.
- 5) Proverbs on trees and plants.

### Proverbs related to the Society

The antiquity of the Konkani language and the ancient history of the Konkani speaking people are yet to be fully explored. In the absence of contemporary or authentic history of the Konkani speaking people, proverbs are the true records that can help us in ascertaining the thoughts and deeds of their ancestors. It is indeed remarkable that the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins have been able to preserve their concepts of social organisation and religious autonomy through their proverbs. Various aspects of their ancient culture have been successfully recorded in the proverbs. Aristotle has truly said that the proverbs are the remnants of ancient philosophy. Here the past has something to say to the present and the bookless world to a world that likes to read. Reflection of the historical development of the society of the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins with all its merits and demerits can be perceived in these proverbs. For example, a Brahmin priest,

In an ancient society of the Konkani speaking people was created as the prophet of God, perhaps the God on earth. Propitiating a priest was considered equal to propitiating God. Hence there was always a Brahmana in the house of the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmin, who administered the affairs of religion and he was called Purohita. The *Rigveda* tells us of such Brahmin priests who practise divinity in their life. This quality of Brahmin priests is pointed out in the Konkani proverbs. A proverb runs thus-

पादां काळनसित्तिल्लो भगवंतु न्हय मंत्र येनाशिल्लो भट्टु न्हय

(He who knows not the padas is not a bhagavata, he who knows not the mantras is not a priest.)

A real Brahmana is supposed to learn all the scriptures and profess the essence of the scriptures to the common people. He was supposed to be a scholar of these scriptures. A bhatta or priest remains a real priest if he knows well the mantras and their importance. The following proverbs support this idea -

मंत्र तंत्र भट्टु जाण खांयंवे जेवंवे हांय जाण

(The priest knows the mantras and I know how to eat and drink.)

The difference between the common folk and a learned priest is well nigh brought out in these proverbs which explain that the bhatta is the knower of the mantras and the common man only knows to eat and drink.

But in spite of the veneration held by these Brahmanas they are not immune to depreciation at the hands of the common people who have a number of proverbs satirising

their weaknesses. The following proverb is an indication to this fact -

भटो भटो आपलो भटो, भटो शिकिल्ले म्हणा .

(The Brahmin priest, our dear priest, does not recite what he has learnt.)

This is a satire on a Brahmana who is corrupted and overpowered by selfishness. Gradually the faith in the priests was lost but the old customs still continued. The faithlessness of the common folk began to turn on the other side i.e. to dishonour the priests and they were condemned. This attitude of the common folk is reflected in the proverb - अक्कूळेलि गायि अप्प्य भट्टाक (A cow which does not give milk is given to the priest, Appayya.). Where gift of a milch cow to a priest was considered as a righteous act leading to a higher world after death, the priest was given a cow which did not give milk. Further the proverbs -

तीळा जोन्नो भिंकं भट्टाक

(The pod of gingely to the priest, Bhikku.)

कूशीले कुवाळे कुष्ट भट्टाक

(The rotten ashgourd to the priest, Kushta.)

are the illustrations of the same lack of faith of the common people in the selfish priests.

There are proverbs which are the outcome of the marriage ceremony which is considered to be an important ritual in the life of a human being. The Acharya or the Brahmin priest was given a number of gifts during the marriage ceremony. Brahmin priests longing for these gifts are pictured well in the following proverbs -

कारेतु चोयता द्योकले तोड पुरोहितु चोयता दक्षिणे तोड  
(The bridegroom looks at the bride's face, the priest looks for his dakshina.)

कारु लोकात्मानेले कशीय आसो घडवाटया दामु पञ्चार जालो  
(Whatever be the relation between the bride and the groom, the priest mainly desires for his dakshina.)

कारकाल मरो कारेतु मोरो भट्टाति घडि तटांतु पोडो  
(The bride and the groom may go to hell, the priest's concern is only dakshina.)

Every sect or religion has its own practice and custom pertaining to sacred law. The Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are not an exception to this rule. From time immemorial these people closely followed the code of conduct given in the Dharmasastras. The Konkani proverbs in their short forms clearly give figurative expressions which are the outcome of the various experiences in the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. These proverbs sometimes play the role of a satire, sometimes offer the criticism of life but they always guide the common man and advise him what is to be done and what is not to be done.

The family of the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins consists of father, mother, sons and daughters and other relations. The duties of a son to his father and mother, the duties of a wife to her husband and vice versa are reflected in the Konkani proverbs. To examine the duty of a son, a son is supposed to be the protector of the family especially of the father and the mother - पुत्राम नरकात् त्रायते इति पुत्रः. This duty of the son to his parents is called पितृकृण. A satirical saying in Konkani reflects in itself the picture of a duty-failed son thus -

अस्सिल्याक भिकके दीना अन्न मेल्लेल्याक पिंडान

(He never gave food to his father when he was alive, after death he offered him rice balls.)

This proverb is a reflection of a general truth found in the society.

The Society of the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins closely followed the moral values of life. The reflections of the true picture of the different relationships among the members of the society can be clearly seen in these proverbs. The proverb अज्जो मेल्लो मंचो रित्तो जल्लो (Grandpa died and the cot fell vacant.) speaks of a grandfather who died and there was no body to occupy the vacant place of the grandfather. The value of tradition was thus reflected in the proverb saying that there was no substitute for the grandfather. Another proverb -अम्मा मेल्लि धूव उटायली (Mother died and the daughter got up.) teaches us how the tradition works in a natural way unknowingly. On the contrary the relationships between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law or a son-in-law do not always remain without flaws. Some proverbs faithfully consider these kinds of relationships. The proverb जावंयि आयला रत्ति मायंचे तोंडांत मत्ति (The son-in-law came in the night and the mother-in-law did not get anything to eat.) presents before us one such truth. Similarly in अड्डळि मोळिं मांयि मेल्लि सुन्नेक बुद्धि अयली (The scraper was broken, the mother-in-law died and the daughter-in-law was enlightened.), it can be perceived how strong an impression a proverb can create in the minds of the people about the unhealthy relationships between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law.

The position of women in the society of the Konkani speaking people has been reflected in the proverbs. For instance there is a proverb बप्पा रांते जल्यारि अम्मा भितेक (The father goes to the market and the mother confines herself to home).

A Gowda Saraswat Brahmin girl was expected to grind and boil rice and look after her house-hold affairs. The Konkani proverb - चेल्लि जल्लि म्होणु रोणक्का मर्सोलु वट्टूनु दित्तलि ती तुक्का, चेल्लो जल्लो म्होणु हरसुनक्का लर्सून भज्जूनु खत्तोलो तो तुक्का (Don't be sad that a girl is born to you, she will grind the coconut for you, and don't be happy that a son is born to you, he will torture you in many ways.) draws a true picture of the position of a girl child in the society.

Domestic quarrels and separations occur frequently and are generally the fault of the mother-in-law who looks upon her son's wife as a slave. The elderly woman indeed lives in constant dread of her daughter- in-law. The proverb - अड्डळि मोळळि मांगि मेल्लि सुन्नेक बुद्धि आयली (The scraper was broken, the mother-in-law died and the daughter-in-law was enlightened.) no doubt, is an outcome of the regular quarrels between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law.

The newly married girls in their new houses were thoroughly subjected to harsh and domineering treatment from their husbands. The proverb पोट्टाक ना म्होणु बायलेक मानु दिक्कप ना (Even if there is no food, do not give unnecessary respect to the wife.) very clearly explains the position of a wife in her husband's house. A wife was allowed to speak of her husband only as 'My master', 'My lord' and sometimes even as 'My God' and not otherwise.

Then only she was treated with respect in her own family as well as in the outer world. The proverb runs thus - बमणाक नक्का जल्लैलि बायल लोककाकयि नक्का (An unwanted wife is always discarded by the public). When a girl was married, everything she received from her future father-in-law or from her own father was most clearly and distinctly set down item by item in a kind of local document. This is known in Konkani by the technical terms as अंदण and विंदण. The proverb connected with this system runs thus - अंदण विंदण ना गो धुव्वे जिभेन सरि जा, मांयक मावांक मारून भायर घालतल्लि जा. (O, my daughter, I have nothing to give you in dowry, be agreeable with sweet tongue and expel the in-laws). The most excellent of all the good works a woman can do is to try to please her husband by showing perfect obedience to him. Such a woman always attains success in her life. The proverbs say-

घोवान जडलें बायलेन संभालें घर थर जालें

(The husband earned, the wife managed and the home flourished.)

घोवा बायलेचें एक चित्त चिंचे पानारि नीद

(If the husband and wife agree with each other they can sleep even on a tamarind leaf.)

घोवा बायलेचें एक चित्त मड्के जाता सीत

(If the husband and wife agree with each other the vessel is full of rice.)

Be the husband deformed, aged, infirm, offensive, immoral, drunkard, gambler, blind, deaf, dumb or crippled, the wife should always look upon him as her God, should lavish on him all the attention and care. Such a combination adds

glamour to life. Otherwise, the proverb has to say घोरु पिस्सो वायल पिस्स घराक जल्लो बिळ्कुटो. (The husband is mad, the wife is mad, and the home is destroyed). Thus a woman is made only to obey at every stage of her existence. As a daughter it is to her father and mother she owes submission, as a wife to her husband, as a daughter-in-law to her father-in-law and to her mother-in-law, as a widow to her sons. At no period of life can she consider herself her own mistress. The well-known saying

पिता रक्षति कोमारे भर्ता रक्षति यौवने  
पुत्रो रक्षति वार्द्धक्ये न स्त्री स्यातन्त्र्यमर्हति

is true to every word used therein.

### Proverbs related to Religion and Philosophy

According to Aristotle, in ancient days proverbs were used for ethical instruction. The Vedic writings used them to expound philosophical ideas and ethical teachings. Konkani being the nearest language to Vedic as well as classical Sanskrit, has a number of proverbs connected with ethical and philosophical teachings. In ancient India the religion of man was to protect humanity. One who does not work for the welfare of human kind had no religion of his own. Love for humanity was the basic teaching of all religions. Love for man was the symbol of love for God. God being the supreme entity, the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins had a lot to think and say about God. A number of proverbs related to this field can be seen.

Some of them are -

देवु अस्स जल्यार कोण जाय

(If God is with you, who else do you want?)

देवु दित्तना चारीय वाटेन दिता

(When God gives he gives from all sides)

जन्मु घल्लोलो देवु तण खावेयता वे ?

(Does God, who has given life, make man eat grass?)

देवान दिल्लेले खावंका

(We have to accept whatever God gives.)

कष्टकालारि देवा उड्गासु एत्ता

(We remember God in our difficult times.)

देवान आठेयल्यारि अंब्याक पोणोसु जावयात

(If God wills, a mango tree can yield jack-fruit.)

देवान सोळ्ळेले मारीक मनशान चांग कोरु गेल्या जवना

(God-forsaken man cannot be reformed by anybody.)

In all these proverbs the strong belief of these people that the whole world is the creation of the omnipotent God and nobody in this world can move an inch without the will of God, is clearly expressed.

As important is the belief in the existence of God, so much so is the belief in the results of Karma. A man is supposed to perform only virtuous actions and not vices. Even work itself can be the worship of God. Intense activity can be a silent adoration. The Konkani speaking people believe in this philosophy. The proverb अप्पण मेल्यारि अपणाक मोळु (One must toil hard for one's welfare.) indicates the same philosophy. Karma is all pervasive, universal. No one can remain without doing Karma. The only question is what is to be done and what is not to be done? The Konkani proverb advises thus- करनाशिल्ले केल्यारि जायनाशिल्ले जत्तले (If one does actions which are not to be done, that which

should not happen, will happen.) He will surely reap the results of his actions. In this context the Konkani proverbs have a lot to say-

कर्मांत बरयलेले जन्मांत सुंटना

(That which is earned by Karma never perishes.)

कर्म धुत्यारि परिहारु ना

(If you wash your bad deeds it will not be an expiation.)

कामा तकीत दाम

(The wealth you receive is proportionate to your work.)

आजि करि पाप मूल दित्ता जाप

(If you commit a sin today, you will answer for it tomorrow.)

All these proverbs point to the belief that Karma binds man. Karma is like a seed. By planting a seed we grow the tree. In turn the tree produces fruits which carry more seeds. So also Karma. Karma performed sprouts a plethora of new Karmas and it is an unending process. Hence the advice is to perform good actions and you will be having a plethora of good actions and good results. If your actions are bad, the results also will be bad. The Konkani proverb अपणाले साळे अपणाले पाया मूळांत (One's shadow is at the root of one's feet.) expresses this beautifully. The figurative sense in this proverb explains that one cannot avoid the good or bad results of his action. Pilgrimages to sacred places are not enough to liberate a person from the bad results of bad actions. The proverb runs thus - कार्शीत गेत्यारीयि रामेश्वरांत गेत्यारीयि पाप सुंटना (You cannot be free from your sins by visiting Kashi and Rameswaram.). Even if a man doing bad actions visits Kashi or Rameswaram, his actions will surely

accompany him. The proverb पापीन गेल्लेले कडे पावळ भरि उद्धाक (Wherever a sinner goes there will be a flood.) also refers to the same idea. These kinds of proverbs inspire man to think more about Karmavada and do virtuous actions in his life. They also advise man to keep away from bad actions.

### Proverbs related to Morals and Ethics

Man is a social being. He lives with his fellow beings. A man living in a society has lot of duties to his fellow beings. The foremost among them is benevolence. One who practises benevolence is a follower of Dharma. The Sanskrit proverb परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् denotes the same idea of benevolence. The superior morality of Hindu ethics teaches that saintly people need not stoop to devilish methods in encountering a devil. The Konkani proverb गायक मारली म्होणु वसराक मारचें वे ? (If the cow is murdered, is it proper to kill the calf ?) refers to this.

Anger must be conquered by forgiveness, the wicked must be conquered by honesty, the miser must be conquered by liberality and falsehood must be conquered by truth. The dictum is अपकारिषु यः साधु स साधुः सदिभिरुच्यते. The Konkani proverbs follow these ethics that they always advise -

कोपु हक्का नाशु संतोषु वेगळ्याक नाशु

(Anger is the cause of self- destruction and happiness is the cause of the destruction of others.)

फटियेक गेल्यारि कर्टे लाभु

(If you lie you will gain a coconut shell (a mark of poverty.)

Anger is an abnormal state of man and its suppression is supremely desirable. Control over anger is a necessary part of a course of discipline which every man must undergo. So also is false-hood. Thus ethics plays an important role in the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins and ethical values form an important part of their society. They believe that ethical values contribute a lot in the life of a person and elevate his soul in the other life. These proverbs place before us the code of conduct and help us in shaping our character. The saying आचारो परमो धर्मः at the very outset presents an idea of the essentiality of customs in human life. The Konkani proverb आचारु चलतल्याक विचारु ऊर्णे (One who follows the customs will not have to suffer.) explains the same ethics going a step further. Obedience to elders is the first and foremost rule of conduct. The Konkani proverb मृत्युगुडाले उत्तर प्रमाण कोरका (Elders' words should be taken as truth.) is a simple form of this code of conduct.

The education imparted to the members of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society is praiseworthy. Elders are considered to be responsible for the protection, education and character- building of the children. Many proverbs are formulated for the moral education of the members of the society as can be seen in

आजि कांचे काम फायि म्होणु दोऱ्याक नज्जा

(What you have to do today should not be postponed.)

गेल्योलो वंळु हरतीन योडिल्यारि एवना

(The time passed cannot be taken back even if it is pulled by an elephant.)

तोण्णांत रुकून पळ्याले उत्तर काढूक जवना

(A word uttered cannot be taken back.)

धोल्लीरि बेरसोलो म्होणु वोयिं उड्डूक नज्ज

(Just because one sits on a pot-belly, he should not try to jump over a fence.)

बेरस्सूनु जाय पाय नीट करुक

(One should sit before one stretches his legs.)

आदायु पोळोनु खर्चु करि

(Spend according to your income.)

आक उड्डता म्होणु पाक उडल्यारि गोबरा राशीरि पडतले

(If a feather moves in the air like the seeds of Calotropis, it will fall down into a heap of ashes).

The first two proverbs in the list speak of the value of time and the third one advises not to utter bad words. The fourth warns a person against self- conceit and the fifth advises him that he must be very careful in his life. These proverbs warn the people against extravagance and blind imitation.

### The Konkani proverbs

सत्याक सोळा वर्ष (Truth is sixteen years-old.)

तुरंत दान महापुण्य (Gifts always bring merit.)

दया बिया गदि वोयल्यारि वड्डता

(Compassion grows like a planted seed.) etc.

speak of the positive and prudential qualities essential for a man. The dignity of labour is established in

अळ्ळस्याक दीसु सरना कष्ट काडतल्याक राति सानि जायना

(For a lazy man the day is endless, and for a hard working man the night is not short.)

काम केल्यारि कामेलि जाता

(He who works, becomes a good worksman.)

काम केल्यारि दामु अस्स

(If you work hard you will have wealth.) etc.

It is clearly perceived that divine contentment is the first condition of all progress, not only in worldly matters but in the spiritual life as well. The proverb तृप्ति आसाचें महाभाग्य (To be contented is a great fortune.) no doubt refers to this universal truth. Love for one's own self is to be extinguished and love for fellowmen should be cultivated. The Konkani proverb जगा सुख दुःख आपले, आपले जगाचें, भो व्होड भाग्य हें समझतल्याचें (Happiness and misery of the world is mine, and mine is that of the world; he who knows this fact is considered to be lucky.) reveals the importance of love towards the fellowmen.

Thus many criteria—external and internal—are laid down for distinguishing between right and wrong for the betterment of a person in these proverbs.

### Proverbs connected with Birds and Animals

God created birds and animals along with man. Among these animals there are aerial animals, wild animals and domestic animals like cows, bulls, goats, buffaloes, camels, donkeys and dogs. References to many of these animals can be traced in the Konkani proverbs since these animals are closely connected with the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Birds have a special importance in the day-to-day life of these people. Many of the Konkani proverbs give a clear picture of most of the domestic birds. Among these birds we can list the crow, pigeon, parrot, cock, hen, cuckoo

etc. Among the animals most frequently seen in the proverbs are elephants, dogs, cows, buffaloes, cats, tigers, donkeys, jackals etc. Examples can be quoted -

गाडव सींग हाडूक गेल्ले कानु कवळून आयले

(The ass desired for horns, but it resulted in the crippling of ears.)

म्हशीचें शींग म्हशीक जड न्हय

(A buffalo does not feel its horns heavy.)

सूण्यान भोंकिल्यार स्वर्गु तोग्गु येता वे ?

(Does the heaven come down by the barking of a dog?)

वागा मिशियेरि कोल्लो खेळता

(The fox plays on the tiger's moustache.)

फर्कु घोड्याक हर्कु लगाम

(Tight rein for a weak horse.)

मारल्यारि हस्ति मारका लुटल्यारि भंडार लुट्टुका

(If you kill, kill an elephant, if you rob, rob a treasury.)

हस्ते रूपान पालो खावंचाकयि मूर्ये रूपान साखर खावंचे बरें

(It is better to eat sugar as an ant than to eat leaves as an elephant.)

कायब्या शापान म्हशि मरना

(A buffalo does not die at the curse of a crow.)

कुंकडाक सप्पन पळ्यारि तांदळा दानो मत्ति जाता वे ?

(If the hen dreams, does the rice grain become pearl?)

Animals were used in transporting goods, for working the machines and mills and for irrigation purpose. They were used in expellers also. Horses were used for carts and

tongas. Donkeys were often made to work and carry heavy loads. Following proverbs may be cited as examples -

गार्हिये संगाति बेलाकरा यात्रा

(The ox also travels with the cart.)

धाण्या बंदिल्लो बैलु

(An ox for an oil mill.)

पारळवा गादि धावून एवून कीड्या गादि हळू वत्ता

(After running like a horse he goes slowly like a worm.)

माळवा पाटीर गोड घत्यारि ताका इत्तें गोड्साणि गोतु ?

(If jaggery is put on a donkey's back, how can he feel its sweetness?)

आपण गदुळव जात्यार दुर्सोरयान फाटीर बेसल्यार इत्याक कोप्पुका?

(If you are a donkey, why should do you become angry if someone climbs upon you ?)

फाटीर दंवु वेस्सांलो म्हाणु गद्वाक गर्व

(The donkey is proud that God is seated on him.)

साखाराम पंतालो धोडो खावंका थोडे धावंका चड

(Sakharam Pant's horse should run a lot but it gets only a little food.)

हस्तेरि वेसल्यान हस्तेरि वेसुका, गाडवारि वेसल्यान गाडवारि वेसुका

(He who sits on an elephant must sit on it and he who sits on a donkey must sit on a donkey.)

हस्तेरि वेसल्यारि रायु न्हय, पायान चमकिल्यारि गरीबु न्हय

(One does not become a king by riding on an elephant and one does not become a destitute by walking on legs.)

Dogs and cats are always referred to in the Konkani proverbs. The dog is a loyal and affectionate friend and companion and will fret if left alone for long hours.

सूण्याक मानु कि यजमानु

(Which is important for a dog, the self-respect or the master?)

सूण्या माजरालि सोयरीक दीसु भरि लडायि

(The relationship between cat and dog results in a day-long quarrel.)

माजराले झगड्यांत सूण्याक पारपत्य.

(In a quarrel between the cats, the dog becomes prominent.)

माजराले दोळे दुद्दारि सूण्या दोळे कुळ्यारि

(A cat's eyes are on milk, a dog's eyes are on the vessel.)

Most of the proverbs related to animals are used for imparting moral education as in,

उंदराक मार्लक घराक उज्जो घालप ना

(It is not proper to set fire to the house in order to kill a mouse.)

भाड्या बैलाक देवा राखण

(God will look after the hired ox.)

सूण्यान भोंकिल्यार स्वर्गु तोग्गु येता वे ?

(If the dog barks, will the heaven come down?)

हरत्तेर बेस्सूनु मग्गुन्हयें घोड्यार बेस्सूनु कुर्वुन्हयें

(Do not beg sitting on an elephant, do not nap sitting on a horse.)

### सूण्यान संतेक गेल्यावरि

(Like a dog going to the market.)

कायळ्याक यजमानत दिल्यारि जगलि भरि पिष्ट

(If the crow becomes the master, the verandah will be full of excrement.)

उदकांत राखूनु मसक्यांकडे वैर करन्हयें

(Do not keep enmity with the fishes while you are in the water.)

खय महाशेषु खय गायंडोळु

(Where is the Sesha serpent and where is the earthworm?)

Sometimes these proverbs are used as Anyokti as in

उंदूरु किते हागतलो शेण्यो किते थापतलो

(How much does the rat excrete and how many cakes are made from the excrement?)

कायळ्याक पावना खांड भरि गू कायळो कोणाक दित्तोलो

(The crow himself is not contented with big mass of human excrement he gets, how can he give it to others?)

उंदूरु गिळत्याक बाल जड वे ?

(For one who swallows a rat, will the tail be heavy?)

करडेक केस रोम एकीचि

(For a bear the hair of the head and the hair of the body are the same.)

कार्शी गेल्लोलो बुक्को

(The cat that went to Kashi.)

कोळकांदो गोङु जाल्यार कोल्लो सोडता वे ?

(If the wild onion is sweet, will the fox give it up?)

गाडवांगेले गायनाक सूर्णे ताळु धरता

(The dog keeps rhythm for the music of the donkey.)

ची: सूण्याक लाज ना आजि म्हळ्ळेले फायि ना

(The dog is shameless, what it says today it forgets.)

मांकडा हत्तांतु माणीक

(Ruby in the hands of a monkey.)

The wild beasts referred to are lion, tiger etc. Lion is well-known for its great valour, ferocity and roaring sound and regarded as the king of animals. Vyaghra, the tiger, is well-known for its cruelty. The proverb is -वागा पोराक दुद्दान्न पोसल्यारीयि ख्वभावु सोणा (The young one of the tiger does not give up its nature, though reared with milk.). Tiger's skin is popular for its various designs. It is used for various purposes. The use of the tiger skin is referred to in the following proverb - वागा मारचे फूडे चमड्या खरीदि (The sale of the hide before the tiger is killed.). Varaha or sukara which is known as डुक्कर in Konkani has also remained the subject of these proverbs. An example is

डुक्कर धूयेत तितलेंचि चिकलांत लळ्टा

(The pig as it is washed, rolls in the mud.)

The rabbit, jackal and monkey are often seen in the proverbial literature of Konkani. Rabbit is purely a vegetarian as is evidenced by the proverbs -

सोस्सो मागता झाड आनी दायजी मागता पाड

(The rabbit urges for a plant and the enemy wishes for a destruction.)

सोरस्याले आयुष्य झाडा मूळातु

(The rabbit lives its life at the roots of plants.)

He-foxes and she-foxes are referred to in the proverbs in various contexts as can be seen in -

कोत्याक शिदाव फारीक करचें लागना

(Foxes do not pay the tax.)

कोत्नीणि वेसली तुसवा राशीरि शेपडी फापळूनु गेलिल

(The she-fox sat on the heap of husk, and went away after shaking its tail.)

कोत्नीणीले घराक झळक्याचें तोरण

(Festoons of fish for the doorway of the she-fox)

The monkey is always referred to for its senseless actions.

मांकडा व्हर्डीकक गाडवा गायन

(Music party of an ass for the wedding of a monkey.)

मांकडा हातांतु भत्ते दिल्यारि उच्चेकय केसाकय केडु

(If the head is in the hands of the monkey, it is harmful to the hair and the lice.)

मांकडा व्हर्डीकक कुंकडा व्होराण

(The procession of the hens for the marriage of monkeys.)

मांकडा हातांत माणीक

(Ruby in the hands of a monkey.)

The birds which these proverbs speak are of different species. Those noted are Garuda, as in गरुडाले गावांत नागरपंचमि (Nagapanchami festival in the country of Garuda.) referring to the ancient puranic history, falcon well-known for its smartness, peacock, famous for its plume and

dancing in the rains, partridge for its speech, the parrot and sarika as good imitators of human speech, paravata the pigeon or dove noted for its lustfulness, kokila, the cuckoo known for its musical cry inspiring tender emotions and believed to leave its eggs in the nest of a crow. Among these the crow is frequently mentioned in these proverbs. Examples are

कुग्गूळ्ले गावांतु कायळ्याक शकुन ना

(There is no good omen for a crow in the country of the cuckoo.)

कायळ्याक तागेलिं पिल्लां चंद

(For a crow, his young ones are beautiful.)

कायळ्या घूडाक फत्तोरु मारलो

(A stone is thrown at the nest of a crow.)

कायळ्या शापान म्हणि मरना

(A crow's curse does not kill a buffalo.)

कीराक बुद्धि सांगिल्यावरि

(As an instruction to the parrot.)

कायळ्याक दोळे तवशारि

(The eyes of the crow are always on cucumber.)

## Proverbs on Trees and Plants

The lands where Saraswats resided were always rich in flora which lent their social life wealth and beauty. The flora provided them fruits and roots as food and medicine and sprouts and flowers as means of ornamentation. The different seasons with their varying atmospheric conditions provided the lands with large number of trees, both big and small, and plants and herbs of numerous varieties. The

Konkani proverbs speak of all such varieties. The main trees referred to in the proverbs are कारस्कर - known for its bitterness as seen in कारस्का वी शकात घल्यारीयि कदूषि. (The seed of the Karaskara tree, though mixed with sugar, remains bitter). Other examples are-

आवो - अंदे यांगल्यारि चीच जाता वे ?

(If a mango tree is planted, will it produce tamarind fruits?)

आवाळो - आवाळो दीवूनु कुवाळे घेता

(To receive an ash gourd in exchange of an amalaka.)

मदुळो - मदुळ्या मृणांत दूद पिल्यारि सूरु म्हणतात

(If one drinks milk under a coconut tree, he will be mistaken for drinking toddy.)

नारु - नारु गडगडलो पोळी कटकटेलो

(The coconut rolled and the rice cake stiffened.)

केळे - केळे गाड म्हाणु राळ्यो खाववें वे ?

(Does anyone eat the rind of a plantain, though the plantain is very sweet?)

तुळसि - गांव भरि भोगूनु आयला तुळरी कल्यांत मुतू बेसलो

(After roaming about in the whole village, he sat in the bush of the holy basil for passing urine.)

Cereals in the Konkani proverbs-

चोणो - चोण्या झाळ्या घोणे काळूक निरसाणि इल्याक

(What is the need of the ladder for plucking the bengal gram from the plant?)

कुळीतु - एक खतखल्यान कुळीतु सिज्जना

(The horse gram cannot be cooked by boiling for a short while.)

उडीदु - उडीदु फुगल्यारि मद्दाळे जाता वे

(Does the black gram when soaked in water become a drum?)

तंदूलु - एक भत्ताक एक तंदूलु

(One grain of rice from a single grain of paddy.)

दुदि - दुदिया धीरा घसळ्या कर्त्त्या संबंधु ताकाय गोत्तु ना माकाय गोत्तु ना

(I do not know and he doesn't know the relationship between the kernel of the pumpkin and the fibres of the sponge gourd.)

रुबड - रुबड फुटल्यारि फुसका भायर एत्ता

(Ants come out when the fig-fruit bursts.)

मोगगोरि - घरचे मोगरेक पोर्मोळु ना

(The jasmine of one's own house does not emit scent.)

Proverbs are traditional learning of the common people. The Konkani proverbs present the history and culture of the Konkani speaking people. These proverbs of traditional learning are composed of beliefs, customs, stories and ways of life and rituals of the ancient people. These sayings are formed in such a way that people remember them and employ them in their day-to-day life in different situations. The immense value of these folk sayings or proverbs is to educate the people. Konkani proverbs present an intimate knowledge of the life and customs of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The intangible aspects of the community's life are more vividly brought out and portrayed in these proverbs. They are a repository of the community's experiences and expressions, thought patterns and value systems, ways and views of life.

## Chapter - II

# Social Structure

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are supposed to be one of the oldest races of India. The antiquity of these people may be traced back to the 4th millennium B.C., the age of Vedavyasa and the *Mahabharata*. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins even today worship Vedavyasa as their spiritual preceptor. References are seen in the *Mahabharata* about the age-old Brahminical culture in India which is still alive in the form of mild traces in the culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. In the absence of contemporary or authentic history, the language and the folk literature orally transferred from generation to generation form one of the sources for the knowledge about these people.

The Saraswats originally belonged to Brahmavarta, the area between Saraswati and Drishadvati. In the Salya-Parva of the *Mahabharata* a detailed account of the Saraswat culture is available.

ऋषीणां बहुलत्वात् सरस्यत्या विशाम्यते  
तीर्थानि नगरायन्ते कूले वै दक्षिणे तदा

शल्यपर्व ३७- ४४

These Brahmanas performed sacrifices on the banks of river Saraswati.

अग्निहोत्रैस्ततरतेषां क्रियमाणैर्महात्मनाम्  
अशोभत सरिच्छेष्ठा दीप्यमानैः समन्ततः -३७ -४४

These Brahmanas were -

वायुभक्षाः जलाहाराः पर्णभक्षाश्च तापसाः  
 नानानियमयुक्ताश्च तथा रथण्डिलशायिनः  
 आसन् वै मुनयस्तत्र सरस्वत्याः समीपतः  
 शोभयन्तः सरिच्छेष्टां गड्गामिव दिवौकसः - ३७ -४९, ५०

The chapter 38 of this Parva describes the different tirthas of Saraswati river. Besides these accounts, in the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata Purana* (Part II Chapter 89), *Sahyadrikhanda* of *Skanda Purana* and the *Satapatha Brahmana* give an account of the migration of Aryans from Saraswati pradesh of the Punjab to the East Bihar i.e. Trihotrapura of Magadha and their further migration from there in successive groups to Gomantak for their permanent settlement. The traces of Magadhi, Maithili, Kosali etc. found in Konkani, supports this hypothesis. These people later came to be designated "Konkana desheeyas" in Gomantak. Thus Saraswat immigrants domiciled in Konkan Desha from the north to the south. The Gowda prefixed to the name of 'Saraswat' goes to substantiate the fact that they belong to one of the five classes of Northern Brahmins. i.e. Pancha Gowdaas. *Skanda Purana* gives reference to Saraswats as a community belonging to the Tirhut division of Bihar.

The Konkani language is supposed to be the main carrier of the culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. This language with all its peculiarities help us in tracing the ancient culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. These people carried with them their language and culture which were influenced by the local aborigines. Their language and

culture strengthened due to this influence. The vocabulary of their language was developed to a great extent. Yet they have kept their original language and culture intact till this day. Mr. Saldanha has correctly noted:- "In it are hidden powers and beauties which will make our hearts throb with pride and excite the admiration of the world" (*The Konkan and the Konkani Language*, p.1).

The cultural terminology found in the Konkani language gives a clear picture of the ancient culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The term 'चेला' 'which is used in the sense of 'boy' suffered a change of meaning. Originally this is a Sanskrit word 'चेल' meaning disciple and the Gowda Saraswats used this term in its original sense when the pious and strictly religious and conservative system of ancient Brahmanical culture was followed by them. In this culture, the father of the child, exclusively the learned Brahman (which is also evident from the Konkani term 'वमूण' for 'वाणी') used to initiate his son to the supreme knowledge leading to the realisation of Brahman. (The custom is still in vogue among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins in the form of Upanayana). Thus the father was considered to be the preceptor (Guru) and the son, the disciple (chela).

Even today the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins invoke Saraswati as the goddess of learning and also as an embodiment of the river, in their prayers. It is a homage paid to the ancestors of these people on the banks of the Saraswati. Further the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are the followers of Sakala Sakha of *Rigueda*. They observe something more than mere rituals, a feeling of "mineness" with regard to *Rigveda*.

In fact 'Saraspati' (सरसां पतिः), as used in Konkani, had been developed under the spiritual pressure of the Vedas. The similarities found in the Vedic language and Konkani strengthen this view. In its oldest form this language existed in Brahmavarta, on the banks of the Saraswati river as used by the ancient Somaryan settlers. Some research findings related to the history of the ancient Somaryan settlers of India strengthens this view (*Glimpses from Our Glorious Past* - p.34). A number of vocables found in Konkani bear similarity with the Vedic vocabulary. The term उग्र was used in the Vedas to denote an अधिकारी. The word उग्राण in Konkani shows close affinity to this Vedic term. The term चरु used in the Veda for denoting the vessel made of bronze is the fore-runner of Konkani चर्वि and चर्कूल. The term कलश (a pot) also is the contribution of the Vedic culture which is used in Konkani to denote a special pot which is used for ritualistic purposes. The Konkani vocables अच्चड, अप्पो, गुर्स्प, घस्सि, पस्ता, पड्डो, भांगि, सावु are only the alterations of Vedic vocables अक्षत, अपूप, गुष्मित, घस्सि, पस्त्य, पष्ट्वा, भंगा and शवर्त. A number of vocables connected with rituals of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins can be cited as examples and can also be traced to Vedic origin. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strictly follow the Vedic rituals even now.

### **Proverbs connected with the history of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins**

The scholars of Konkani culture agree that South Konkan emerged as a separate entity from early centuries A. D. and that it had a language and culture of its own. This distinct personality of South Konkan was recognised from the Puranic literature. Upto the Portuguese colonisation,

The Konkani region was flourishing in all ways and Goa was a part of this. It was an ancient country and the people residing there, especially the Saraswats, were the people of ancient lineage and history. In the sixteenth century, due to the Portuguese inquisition, the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins had to leave Goa forcibly, yet their appreciation for the country is reflected in their proverbs. They had to say with great disappointment that गोयं फरंग्याले जल्ले (Goa has now become a colony of the Portuguese.). Their appreciation for Goa is well-reflected in the proverb - जाणतल्यांक गोयं नेण्टल्यांक योग (For those who know, it is Goa, for those who do not know, it is something insignificant). This proverb is an evidence to the fact that the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins still remember the golden days they had spent in this beautiful land. There are a number of proverbs in Konkani tracing the life and culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins in Goa. The proverbs - खंय गा वत्ता ? खोर्जुव्यांत (Where are you going man? to Khorjuo), फतरप्यान गोयं लागी (The distance to Goa is nearer from Fatarpem), वारदेशकारांले वौयिं (The fence of Bardesh), घालता जल्यार घालि गे रंडे भीक हांव पेडणेचो भिकारि (If you have something, give me alms, I am a beggar from Pedne), all refer to their life in Goa. युवकील्ले गोरुं धामापुरच्या तळ्यांतु (The missing cattle is found in the pond of Dhamapur.) refers to Dhamapura, the village of Salsete in Goa. Certain families are noted for their hospitality to strangers who enter their village.

Goa was a prosperous centre of commerce from ancient times and its trade relations extended from Zanzibar in Africa to China and from Ceylon to Saurashtra on the western coast. The proverb घाटारि गोरवां गोयांत तारवां (The cattle is on the hill side and the ships are in Goa.) refers

to this flourishing trade of Goa. Arab traders settled in Goa and were trading in horses which they imported from Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan. The proverb घोवा भयान धरले रान थंय भैटलो मुसलमान (Out of fear of the husband, she fled to the forest and there she found herself in front of a Musalman) refers to the Muslim population in Goa.

In Goa the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins were divided into different Gotras according to their ancestral clans of Rishis. This fact can be seen in the proverb कुल गोत्र ऊणे जाल्यारीयि मल मूत्र ऊणे ना (Even though the family and the clan are low, there is no shortage for faeces and urine.) They had distinguishable surnames in Goa—such as Senai, Porob, Patel, Camotim, Naik, Bhandari, Samant, Takur etc. (*Early History of Deccan* vol.I, 1884, p.47). Those who distinguished themselves in the king's services were given the titles Naik and Rao. The proverb पार्स्कल नायकालो सोरो (Todd of Paskal Naik.) refers to such a “Naik”. The surname Senai is often seen in the Konkani proverbs. बोंब शेणै करीत ती दीवाळि (Diwali is that which is celebrated by Bomb Shenoi), कुशीले कुवाळे कुष्ट शेणैक (The rotten ash-gourd is given to Kushta Shenoi), कोंकोणो व्हावु मेल्लो शेणै खावु मेल्लो (Konkani man died of carrying the burden and Shenoi died of eating.) etc.

Brahmanas were in charge of the religious and the educational organisations side by side with the top officials of the governmental bureaucracy. These social leaders exercised great power and authority in the affairs of the society. For the purpose of administration, the kingdom was subdivided into several Talukas or Mahals and each Taluka into several villages, each village having its own administrative council which looked after the village administration.

Brahmins were in charge of collecting revenue. There are a number of proverbs which refer to Mhal Pai (Mahal Pati) who was in charge of the Mahal in Goa.

म्हाळपैक जोर, सगळ्या गावांक पेज

(When Mhal Pai has fever all the people of Goa will take rice-gruel.)

गोपची भूते म्हाळपैचे घर

(The soil of Goa is the house of Mhal Pai.)

म्हाळपैच घरच्या लग्ना मांटवांत कुट्टप्पा कुर्टाक मुंजी पोडु

(In the marriage pandal of Mhal Pai, the thread ceremony of Kuttappa was celebrated.)

म्हाळपै घरचे ताक मागतल्यानि व्हरचे

(The buttermilk of Mhal Pai's house was taken away by the beggars.)

म्हाळपैचे काण गळतले आनी माका मेळटलै

(The waist-ornament of Mhal Pai will fall on the ground and I will get it.)

All these proverbs centre round the important personality of Mhal Pai, an administrator who was the petty king of the Mahal. He was a person with historical importance among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The last proverb in the above list is very interesting. It explains that Mhal Pai wore a very loose gold girdle. The people around him lived with the hope that some day it would slip over and fall on the ground and they would get it. Usually kings are not supposed to pick up from the ground anything that falls from their hand or body and any one around the king could

pick it up and keep it for himself.

The proverb पांच जन मेळ्ळेले कडे परमेश्वर (Where five people meet there is truth.) refers to the Panchayati system prevalent in the villages.

The Educational pattern consisted of Pathasalas and Agraharas as caste-dominated institutions and the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins dominated these institutions. They were well-known for their keen intelligence. Higher education was imparted by the establishments called Agraharas, Mathas and Brahmapuri. Agrahara consisted of a group of learned Brahmins who were noted for their scholarship. Matha was a typical Indian monastery with monks, ascetics and students living within its precincts. These monasteries demanded strict observance of celibacy lapse of which was punished by expulsion. These were attached to some local temples. The proverb उडपी मठ पारपत्य (The fame of Udupi Math) indicates this system of education prevalent among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins in the olden days.

The inscriptions of the period show that kings spent a portion of their wealth to support the learned men at their courts. Among these there were also poets who produced poetic works of high standard. The learned men whom the kings supported and rewarded at their courts were Brahmins. The proverbs रायान म्हळ्ळेली पूर्वदिशा, भट्टान म्हळ्ळेली उम्मास (East is determined on the approval of the king and the new-moon-day is determined on the approval of the priest.) and रायान सांगिल्यारि दळ हल्लता, भट्टान सांगिल्यारि शेंडि हल्लता (Leaves move on the order of the king and the tuft moves on the approval of the priest.) reflect this system and

describe beautifully the close connection between the kings and the Brahmanas of that age.

By sixteenth century, Goa was conquered and converted into a Portuguese colony. Some indications to the Portuguese inquisition can be seen in these proverbs here and there. The Brahmins were forcibly converted to Christianity and they were compelled to attend the sermons in the churches, and the disobedient were punished imposing on them, suitable punishment. The Konkani term बट्टप from the Sanskrit भ्रष्ट refers to this conversion which was imposed on the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The proverbs किंगुरा मांस खाल्नु बट्टोलो (Converted by eating the flesh of the gnat.), ब्राह्मणान बट्टप ना समुद्रान अट्टप ना (Brahmana will never be converted as the ocean will never be dry.) etc. put some stress on this aspect of the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Thus we can see that the wisdom of the age was preserved in the form of proverbs and handed to the next generation orally. Much of the essence of the wisdom was lost during the oral transmission. Still we are able to get some indications of the same through these proverbs.

### **The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Society**

Sharing is the soul of culture and the bond of society. Society can be looked upon as a process of interaction which is capable of existing longer than the life span of an individual. It is a carrier of culture and it can be best presented through the study of the proverbs. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society is not an exception to this rule. It has passed through a long process in the history of Indian culture. The Konkani proverbs describe all the aspirations

of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society in their true form. The wishes, expectations, stereotypes, tensions, conflicts, ideals and various imponderables from the lives of the performers of this society are reflected in these proverbs. An analytical study of these proverbs can give us an insight into the deep rooted cultural traits of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins, their images, statuses, roles, ideals, values and behaviours of life. In short, these proverbs meaningfully add to our knowledge about the social life of the common folk. These proverbs present a pictorial autograph of the social life of the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmins in its various shades.

Saraswat culture, the ancient Brahmanical culture of India, with its most ancient history which can be traced back to thousands of years, as old as the Vedas, had a rich fund of folk sayings. The various threads that make up the magnificent fabric of the Saraswat culture are unique and distinct in their own way. History, language and religion have contributed to this. Many proverbs are the true evidences of the age-old ancient culture of the Saraswat Brahmins and their hoary antiquity. The vocabulary used for presenting these sayings also add to this. These proverbs echo the impulses of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins thus placing before us a true and genuine picture of the society, the ancient Indian society, in its true sense. The bright as well as the dark aspects of such a society with joys and sorrows, trials and tribulations, happiness and miseries of the members, are seen reflected in these proverbs. A range of feeble historical facts, a true picture of the family life, the cordial and uncordial relations between the members of the

family, rewards and reactions seen in the closest relatives, all these have found vivid expression in the Konkani proverbs.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are supposed to be the descendants of the ancient Saraswats, the disciples of the great Rishi Saraswata who resided on the banks of the Saraswati river for a considerably long period. Afterwards due to natural calamities they were forced to leave that place for other new settlements. While in Brahmaparta region, their main occupation was to impart Vedic knowledge. They were closely akin to the ancient Indian Brahmanical culture and followed the rules of the ancient Indian society strictly. The Varna organisation had taken place in the Rigvedic period. As a clan who closely followed the *Rigveda*, the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins also believed in the social system of Varnadharma and the four Ashramas mentioned there of.

### Varnadharma

In ancient times there were four varnas, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.

ब्राह्मणोऽरथं मुख्यमार्गोदवाहूः राजन्यः कृतः  
ऊरु तदरथं यद्वेश्यः पद्म्यां शूद्रो अजायत

ऋग्वेद १०.१०.१२

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins closely followed this system. The term Brahmana was generally used for a priest, Kshatriya for a warrior, Vaisya for a business man and Sudra for a labourer. Brahmana was considered to be spiritually supreme and Kshatriya materially the master. The concept of Varna being closely linked up with the concept of Dharma and combining both terms as Varnadharma was considered

the basis of Brahmanical social order. This Varnadharma was a socio-cultural complex, a particular status, a heirarchical order of social units. Ritual purity was considered as the main characteristic of the Varna system, and the Brahmanical order was treated as the supreme order of human life. The Konkani proverbs give a detailed picture of this class of Brahmanas in its true form.

The word Brahmana was derived from Brahman, the meaning of which in the *Rigveda* is a priest. Here the term Brahmana is reckoned as the most important of the four priests, the others being Agni, Indra and Brihaspati. According to Yaska ब्रह्मा सर्वविद्या: सर्वाणि वेदितुं अर्हति (Nirukta, 1.8.) which means that Brahma (the priest) is supposed to have all knowledge. The meaning of Brahma given by Yaska is implied in the Konkani proverb- पदां कळन्तिल्लो भगवंतु न्हयिं मंत्र येनाशिल्लो भट्टु न्हयिं (He who does not know padas is not a Bhagavata and he who does not know the mantras is not a priest). A real Brahmin priest is supposed to learn all the scriptures and profess the essence of these scriptures to the common people. A bhatta (priest) in Konkani is a real priest only if he knows well the mantras and their importance. The proverb to this effect is मंत्र तंत्र भट्टु जाण खावंचे जेवंचे हांव जाण (The priest knows mantras and tantras, and I know how to eat and drink). Comparison between the learned Brahmin priest and the common folk is clearly brought out in the above proverb which with the help of an illustration, explains the importance of the priest to the common people. Another comparative statement can be seen in the proverb - भट्टाक पुराण व्होड काजीक कुराण व्होड (For a Hindu priest Puran is important and for a Muslim priest Quran is important).

These proverbs profess truth only. A society in which a Brahmin was revered is well-reflected in these proverbs. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins treat their priest or Purohita with great regard, because the chief duty of a priest is to remove the ignorance in which the rest of mankind is plunged. He rejects in thought, word and deed, every sinful action and puts in practice all the virtues that he preaches. The life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins was impregnated with religious convictions and practices and a person like Brahmin Purohita was considered as a boon for them. Offering gifts to such a Brahmin priest was considered a means to attain good rewards in the other world. The importance of a Brahmin priest for a man is indicated in an indirect way in the following proverb - कुंकडाक जोइशि इत्याक मंकडाक भट्टु इत्याक (What is the need of an astrologer to the hen and a priest to the monkey). The high rationale of the Konkani people who revered the knowledge of a learned Brahmana is well brought out in this proverb.

Without a good priest, the rituals of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community have no meaning at all. Without a priest there cannot be a ritual and without a ritual there cannot be a priest. The Konkani proverb is - तीर्थ असत्यारि भट्टु ना (When there is a holy place there is no priest). The rituals connected with the dead for the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are conducted at holy places and the learned priest is supposed to conduct these rituals. Hence the above saying. The proverb- राम भट्टाक पंचगदायि (Panchagadai, a sweetmeat to the priest, Ram.) refers to the general belief that a priest sanctifies the row in which he is seated for meals. The proverb refers to such an occasion

where the sweet dish is served to the priest after meals. पोट भरलेले ब्राह्मणाक धयांत फत्तोरु एत्ता (Brahmana with full stomach finds fault with the curds.), also indicates the meals given to a Brahmana after the completion of the rituals.

The negative side of this priest concept also can be seen in the Konkani proverbs. It is surprising to note the real picture of misappropriations and faithlessness towards the priests who were supposed to be the gods on earth. The Brahmin priests who long for the dakshina and gifts from his benefactors are also clearly pictured in the Konkani proverbs. That there is no other ritual better than a marriage to picturise such a greedy Brahmin priest, can be clearly seen in the following proverbs.

व्होरेतु चोयता व्होकले तोंड पुरोहीतु चोयता दक्षिणे तोंड

(The bridegroom looks at the bride's face, the priest looks for his dakshina.)

व्होक्कल मोरो व्होरेतु मोरो भट्टालि घडि तट्टांत पोडो

(The bride and the groom may go to hell, the priest's concern is only dakshina.)

At the end of the ritual, the priest who conducts the nuptials receives his dakshina. The Brahmin priest always becomes restless until he receives the dakshina. In a marriage ceremony, the priest is supposed to receive a good amount of dakshina. The anxiety of such a Brahmin priest is well expressed in the above sayings. The affected common folk react against such selfish priests and this becomes the subject matter of the following proverbs -

भटो भटो आपलो भटो भटो शिकलें म्हणा

(The priest, priest, our priest, the priest does not recite what he has learnt.)

भट्टाक इत्याक तारू दरज्याक इत्याक गोरू ?

(What is the need of a ship to a priest and the cattle to a tailor ?)

Priests are expected to offer selfless service in a religious and spiritual atmosphere. Hence the selfishness shown by them for material pleasure, makes the people slough off the whole priestly clan. The results are clearly pictured in the following proverbs -

अप्पूळेलि गायि अप्पय भट्टाक

(The cow which does not yield milk is offered to the priest, Appaya.)

तीळा जोत्रो भिक्कं भट्टाक

(The pod of gingelly is offered to the priest, Bhikku.)

कुशीले कुवाळे कुष्ट भट्टाक

(The rotten ash-gourd is given to the priest, Kushta.)

Where the gift of a milch cow was considered as a righteous act leading one to a higher world after death, the priest was offered a cow which does not give milk. Similarly a rotten ash-gourd, instead of a fresh one, was offered to the Brahmin priest. Thus the Konkani proverbs draw a real picture of the Brahmin priests who are not exempt from the human weaknesses. In spite of all these human weaknesses and demerits, the Brahmin priest has a respectable position in the houses of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community. This is reflected in the following proverb - रायान म्हळ्ळेली पूर्वदिशा भट्टान म्हळ्ळेली उम्मास (East is determined on the

approval of the king and the new-moon-day is determined on the approval of the priest). The proverb clearly indicates the importance of a Brahmin priest in the matters of religion. He has the same position as of a king in these matters. Further it is evident from the Konkani proverb - राबूनु मुतचे गिरेस्ताक धावंतना मुतचो पुरोहीत (The house-holder who urinates by standing has a priest who urinates while running.)— which means, the priest always moves according to the will of the house holder.

As the Brahmana is well presented in the Konkani proverbs it is far more difficult to draw a picture of other varnas from these proverbs. Yet some indications regarding the king can be seen in some proverbs such as the following:-

रायाचे तकीत जनपद

(As is the king, so are the subjects.)

रायाले खंड्याक दोनीय तांतु धार

(The king's sword is double-edged.)

रायाले मन आनी रुकाची सावळी तावतावळि परतता

(The king's mind and the shadow of the tree change frequently.)

The king is the representative of Kshatriya community. Being a ruling class the Kshatriyas or the kings were also in a position to determine the socio- economic and cultural developments.

As far as the position of Vaisyas in Varna scheme is concerned it is noticeable that they had their own position in the society.

## Caste system

Besides the four Varnas, several professional groups like blacksmith, cobbler, barber, physician, goldsmith, merchant and chariot builders are mentioned in the *Rigveda*. Obviously the above mentioned castes existed in the society. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins who are supposed to be the followers of the *Rigveda* followed this system from very ancient times. This society seems to be closely in contact with such artisan castes and we can see references to these castes in the Konkani proverbs. There are a number of Konkani proverbs on the life of a potter.

### कुबराक घड मडके ना

(The potter has no unbreakable pots.)

### कुबराची मटकि सदा फुटकि

(The pot of a potter is always breakable.)

### कुबराची सून मडकि विवकूक रस्त्यारि एत्तलि

(The daughter-in-law of the potter will come to the road for selling the pots.)

### कुबोरु आपले मडक्यां शिपाररा करता

(The potter praises his own pots.)

### कुंबरा कुंबरा मान इत्ते यांकडे, सर्वांगइले घड, मातयेक बैरूनु रड (O, potter why are you sad? the pots are of the public, cry for the clay.)

These proverbs give some indications regarding the different aspects of the life of a potter viz. the close contact of the potter with the earth, the raw material used for making pots, the brittle nature of an earthen pot, the involvement of the family members of a potter in the act of pot making and

selling, the attachment of the potter to his pots etc. The proverb कुंबरागेले ओव्यांत तंब्या चेंबु सोदचें (To search for a copper pot in the mould of the potter) refers to a futile task. These proverbs establish the fact that the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community was in close contact with the potters. Similarly there are proverbs on Goldsmith as - सोनरांगेलो प्रश्न वाडो (The problem of the goldsmith is the bangle). That the profession of the goldsmith was considered as a respected one is evidenced from the proverb - सर्व सोळळे सोनारपण मांडलें (Left everything and took up goldsmithy.) The proverb सोनरान कानु विंदल्यारि दुक्कना (If the goldsmith pierces the ear, there is no pain in the ear.) establishes the skill of the goldsmith in his work and also the contact of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins with the goldsmiths. The proverb अम्माले तल्ली भंगारयि सोनारु फारतलो (The goldsmith will steal gold even from his mother's mangalsutra), refers to the goldsmith's habit of stealing gold while making the ornaments.

The barber forms an important part of the society. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin men cannot live without a barber. Moreover the barber is also closely connected with the rituals of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community. The shaving of the head before the rituals is an important custom of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. For this they seek the services of the barber. The proverb गोकर्णातूलो म्हाळो (The barber from Gokarna.) can be cited as an example. Again, the proverbs -

केळ्याक पळ्येल्यारि गाडव खाको उकळता

(The donkey passes excrement when it sees the barber.)

राण्याक रोम अस्सून केळशाक इति गृणु ?

(What is the gain for the barber if the dog has hair?)

May stress on the importance of the barber in the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin people.

The Kunbis form a constituent part of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins greatly depended on the services of the Kunbis. There are proverbs on this set of people which show that they were in close contact with the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. For example -

कुणव्या हत्तातु जवाद दिल्ली, आंबली वांगडा भज्जूनु खेल्ली

(If you give sweet scented musk to a Kunbi, he will fry it and eat it with his gruel.)

कुणव्या जावय वाश्या तटिट घेवूनु गेल्लो

(The son-in-law of the Kunbi has taken away the bamboo curtain.)

The Konkani proverb बट्टो बेरसाल्लो अच्यारि चेडुंयांचे गोयंडे तसरीता (An idle carpenter sharpens the buttocks of the children.) refers to a carpenter. चमाराले देवाक छाणणे पुज्जा (Offerings of chappals to the God of a cobbler.) and चमारालि नजर जोत्यारि (Cobbler's eyes will be always on chappals) etc. speak of a shoe-maker. There are proverbs on fishermen as can be seen in खारव्यालि जोडि व्होडाक, धणियालि जोडि दंडाक, शेणीलि जोडि पिडाक (The earnings of the fisherman is for the wealthy people, and the earnings of Shenoi is for oblations.) and खारव्याक गोरवां सिद्धांक तारवां (There is no need of cattle for the fishermen and there is no need of ships for the Siddhas). The proverbs referring to Mahars, an untouchable class of

people in the society are also found in Konkani. चूडि पेट्टोनु म्हारा हाडप (To invite a Mahar by sending a torch.) and म्हारि अंबूणु व्हरचें वज्रें कोणा बोडारि दिवंचें ? (To whom will be given the load that the Mahar woman takes on her head?) can be quoted as examples which refer to the position of the Mahars in the society and the work allotted to them. The caste of washermen was one having different customs and manners. The life of these people was dedicated to the washing profession. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins had contacts with these people in connection with the washing of the clothes. Hence the proverbs -

मडवळा मोडें भायर काडतचि कळ्टा

(The corpse of the washerman is recognised as soon as it is taken out of the house.)

मडवळा घरच्या लग्नाक वस्त्रांचि जायना भीक

(For the marriage of the washerman, there is no scarcity of clothes.)

Thus the society as reflected in the proverbs was segmented into two main castes - Brahmins and non-Brahmins with innumerable sub - castes. Yet we find it as an instrument of assimilation, reflecting the pattern of kinship-interdependence. Some inaccuracies can be seen in this generalisation. Each caste remained a social unit in itself while at the same time it remained a group within the total. Here the essential human concerns are not forgotten. The quality of life, human feelings and emotions are kept up, though temporarily. The concepts of purity and pollution were never wholly absent here. But it provided a uniquely inconsistent flexible frame-work large enough to embrace all contradictions.

## The Social life - Family relationships

The society is an organic unit and it can be regarded as transpersonal network of relationships in which the individual is, as it were, the nodal point at the intersection of the lines of force. This is true in the case of Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society also. At the social level we see that family corresponding to the cell, is the seed-bed as well as the carrier of culture. The family atmosphere is a determinant of the whole future life. Specialists are unanimous about the prime need for affection and security in the early stages of life which can very well be provided through the family, and the lack of which may eventually lead to unhealthy conditions of life, family feud, mental diseases like hysteria etc. Man is not made for either solitude or multitude, but is meant to live in small living groups. This can be successfully co-ordinated only through sound family relationships. In the Konkani proverbs we can see all such relationships in their variety.

The family as an institution can be defined as a group including husband, wife and children constituted on the basis of marriage in order to establish a household. The Konkani proverbs - घोवान जडलें, बायतेन रांभालें, घर थर जालें (The husband earned, the wife managed and the home flourished.) and घोवा बायतेचे एक चित्त मरुके जाता रीत (When husband and wife agree with each other the vessel is full of rice.) refer to a full fledged household with its happy and contented members. A Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family, as it is evident from the proverbs, is considered as that which is based on spiritual, religious and psychological bonds and not on physical and tangible bonds. These

people believe in the relationships between the members of family from generations to generations. There may be happiness or misery in a family but it is supposed to be divided among the members alone. The proverb says - घरांतूलि कथा आनी पोटांतूलि व्यथा कोणाक सांगुन्हयें (Secrets of the home and affliction in the stomach must not be disclosed to any one). Being the followers of a patriarchal system, the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family considered the status of the father as head of the family. The father was treated with great dignity in the family. The eldest son enjoyed a favourable position compared to the other members in the joint family under whose roof his younger brothers, their families, sons and their wives and children and grandchildren lived. They ate food cooked at one hearth, held property in common, participated in common family worship and were related to each other according to one of the several kinship systems prevailing in ancient India. Rights and duties, sentiments and authority constituted the unity of a family. Members were related by an interlocking pattern of mutual dependence; individuality was subordinate to collective solidarity and the younger generation strictly controlled by the elders.

### **Father-Son**

The children were never free in activities and speech in the company of their fathers. The father is supposed to be a dictator of the family. The children were always in the mother's company and not their father's. Still a child is likely to follow the father's mannerisms. There is a special bond which unites the father and the son. The son inherits his father's authority. A Konkani proverb runs thus -

बापायले व्यरान पुत्ताक बियेवी कोडि झाडाक

(The vices of the father are inherited by the son, the worms in the seed affect the plant.).

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strongly believed in tradition. As the father, so the son, or the daughter gets the tradition from her mother. The proverb says - बपसू तकीत पूतु आवसू तकीत धूव (Son like father and daughter like mother). Tradition cannot be changed. It continues according to the nature's law. A mango seed always grows a mango tree only and a mango tree produces mangoes only. The Konkani proverbs

बिया तकीत भात

(As the seed so the paddy.)

कारया रुकाक बोर जत्ता वे ?

(Will the *Nux vomica* tree yield jujube fruit ?)

अंबो वोयत्त्वारि पाणीसू जत्ता वे ?

(If you plant a mango tree will it yield jack fruit?)

फळा तकीत वी, धरणी तकीत उदाक

(Seed like the fruit and water like the earth.)

reveal this fact. A son always willingly or not, follows the tradition of his father as given in the proverbs -

फोवु कांडतल्या पूतु चारमूरो भाजतालो

(If the father pounds the parched rice (flattened), the son is sure to scorch the parched rice.)

सारणी खुंट्यान झडतल्या पूतु पिस्सौडि पुणि काडतोलो

(The son of the sweeper will take at least a brush for white wash.)

Further the good or bad actions of a son or a daughter recall their tradition as is recorded in the proverb बिया गूणु किरल्यारि कळता (The quality of the seed will be known when it sprouts). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin families almost invariably hope for a son; a male heir is enjoined on the father as a religious and economic necessity. If the first child is a male, it is rejoicing. A son guarantees the continuation of the generations and he will perform the last rites after the father's death to ensure his peaceful departure to the world of the ancestors. पुतात् त्रायते इति पुत्र (One who liberates his father from hell). A son assumes a man, social dignity and status. Both of them are jointly responsible for the maintenance of all other members of the family. The relationship is one of mutual dependence. The duty of the son to perform his father's last rites indicates the father's dependence on the son. As in the Hindu classical tradition, so in the Konkani proverbs, strong belief in the religious duties to be performed by a son is found popular. By his sacred acts the son is described in proverbs as a sacrosanct essentiality which affects not only this life of his parents but their other life too. Besides sacred act, birth of a son carries tremendous social and economic meanings. He who has many sons is considered to be fortunate. Being a patriarchal society the son is more valued in a family than a daughter.

### **Mother-Son**

A mother is accorded very high place in the family. A mother exceeds a thousand times a father the claim to be honoured by a child. Mother is always revered in the family. There is no effective relationship warmer or more intense than that between mother and son. It has been so since

the establishment of the joint family system in the Vedic times and it continued to be so in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family. The proverb runs thus अवसूले मन कातळि चेरडाले मन कराटे. (Mother's mind is the kernel and the child's mind is the shell of the coconut). Mother is the centre of the domestic life. Prolonged unilateral dependence from the infancy upto the age of three or more and the inculcation of passivity, docility, obedience and respect especially when reinforced by excessive indulgence, all tend to encourage a son's very deep attachment to his mother. The proverbs

शेता जाय पावसु पुता जाय आवसु

(The field is in need of the rain and the son is in need of the mother.)

चेरडाले हाल आवसूकडे थाइ

(The lament of a child is always before the mother.)

राज्याक रायु जल्यारि आवसूक पूतु

(As the king for the kingdom, so the son for a mother.)

indicate the same relationship between a mother and a son. The early deprivation and submissiveness which a young girl and a young daughter-in-law have to suffer is gradually given up after she bears a son. Her frustrating position is largely met by her becoming a mother of a male child. The position of mother is well described in the proverb मोगु केल्लो चडु चेल्लो जल्लो पाडु (The son was pampered and he became a headache). Naturally the mothers care the most for the food and the amenities of their children. The proverb आवरून पोळोवंचे पोट बायलेन पोळोवंचे मोट (The mother looks for the stomach and the wife looks for the weath.) differentiates the care of a mother from that of a wife. The proverb जेवणा रुचि

आवसून वाळ्यारि (The food is tasty when the mother serves it.) also refers to this care of a mother. The mother's love is always one-sided. The children are delighted being able to get her good wishes. The proverbs मिटा पशि रुचि ना अम्मा पयले बंधु ना (There is no taste better than that of salt and no relation greater than the mother.) and आवसूक एक चेड्ड जड म्होणु जाता वे ? (Is the child a burden for a mother?) reflect this love of a mother to her children. The proverb बायले मितीं घर आवसू मितीं कुळार (Home is important because of the wife and the paternal house is important because of the mother.) indicates the importance of a mother in the family. She is an embodiment of sacrifice and suffering. She is most delightful and always kind-hearted to her children. The same is the truth behind the proverb मजरी दांत मजरी पिल्लाक लग्गनाय (The cat's teeth will not hurt the kitten.) in which the love of a mother is elucidated in the pretext of a cat.

Though the proverbs lay great prestige and honour to the position of a mother, sometimes they do not hide the truth which is not agreeable in any way as far as the mother is concerned. The proverb धा जाणाचि आवसु कट्यारि (A mother of ten children wanders about the streets.) presents such a truth which is always disliked by all. Generally mothers are very kind and soft-hearted and for their sincerity and affection they are highly praised by the society.

### **Children in the family**

Child-rearing is a natural means to transmit the configuration from one generation to the next. There is an unbroken link between the family world around him. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin child learns about his environment

more by observation than through explicit parental instinct, since it is being reared in a joint family. The Konkani proverb मायंक नाका चेडू आज्याक जाय नातरा (Mother desires not a child, but the grandfather desires for a grandson.) gives a clear picture of a joint family in which the child is brought up by the grandparents with love and affection. The child is not expected to look after itself until comparatively late in its development. Upto that time it is pampered and loved to a great extent. The proverbs मोगा चेरडाक पाय वांकडे (The legs of the fondled child are curved.) and मोगा पुताक हांतणारि भूत (Ghost resides on the bed of the fondled son.) can be quoted as examples. That the parents love their children very much is evident itself from the proverbs -

आपले चेडू नक्तर पेल्याले म्हारा पोर

(One's own child is like the shining star, other's is a child of Mahar.)

कायळ्याक तागेली पिल्लं चंद

(For a crow, his young ones are beautiful.)

आमची चेडूवां घोड्यारि दुसरयाली चेडूवां दरयारि

(Our own children are on the horse and those of others are in the sea.)

Where there are no young children, the grown-up ones are fondled with care- सान चेडूवां नातिल्ले कडे कोड चेडूवां मोगाची In their earliest ages children are more attached to the mother and afterwards to the father. The proverb runs thus - चेडूवां सानपणांत आवसूक पिताति व्होडां जातकायि बपसूक पिताति (Children at their young age depend on the mother and when they are grown up, depend on the father). The dependence of the children on their parents and the control of the parents on their children are indicated in this proverb.

The children from a rich family are always arrogant and talkative while in a poor family, always weak in all respects.

### The proverb

दुबळ्याचा भुरग्यांची गोमटी लांब  
गिरेस्ताचे भुरग्यांची जीब लांब

(The necks of the poor man's children are long and the tongues of the rich man's children are long.)

supports this fact. Yet generally it can be found that the children are always simple and pure by heart. The proverb भुरग्यांचे मळणेक बी ना भात (The children do not consider the seed, but only paddy.) throws light on this truth.

### Daughter

The need for continuity of traditions and customs calls for the co-existence of a member of the old generation, even if the older generations have their own weaknesses and drawbacks. A daughter learns a lot from her mother and her grandmother. The proverb अम्मा मेल्लि धूव उटायली (The mother died and the daughter got up.) refers to the tradition in a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family. The real instinct of a daughter always rests on her mother. The young daughter consciously tries to imitate her mother and takes the mother as a model. The attitudes, ideas and habits of the daughter always reflect the model of her mother. The Konkani proverb चेल्लेक आवसु सर्स्याक पावसु (For the girl, a mother, and for a plant, the rain.) pictures the necessity of a mother for her daughter.

Apart from this brighter side of the mother-daughter relationship, a number of the Konkani proverbs refer to a daughter as a heap of grief. The expression-

चेल्ले जाल्ले म्होणु रद्दूनका मरसोलु वट्टूनु दित्तलि ती तुकका  
चेल्लो जल्लो म्होणु हररुनका लरसूनु भज्जूनु खत्तोलो तो तुकका  
(Don't be sad that a girl is born to you,she will grind  
the coconut for you, don't be happy that a son is born  
to you, he will torture you in many ways.)

clearly indicates the position of a daughter in her family. Even the only daughter is not liked by the family members because it is strongly believed that अर्थो हि कन्या परकीय एव (The girl is the property of another). The proverb जग्गो वेसाल्यांगरि चेल्ले निंदल्यांगरि चेल्लो (Girl is born to him who is awake and boy is born to him who is asleep.) indicates the same view. The daughter is always compared to an enemy. This is because of the social structure of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The female child is always supposed to be the wealth of her husband and not of her father.

The only benefit out of a girl child is that she will help the family members in the household. The Konkani proverb पांच वर्षी चेल्लन आसल्यांरि पंचवीस दंदां आधारु (A five year-old girl is a support for twenty five kinds of work.) at its best reveals this system. The activities of the daughter are mostly restricted and limited within the walls of a kitchen. She always remains inside the kitchen by the force of customs and tradition. From the birth itself she acquires training in cultural traditions of the society and family. She is supposed to go to her husband's house which in all respects will be higher to that of her father. The proverb says - चौल्ले व्होडांगेरि दीवंका, सून हाडची गरीवांगेलि (The daughter must be married to a wealthy man and a daughter-in-law should be from a poor family). Daughter's stay at her parent's house is short. She is always treated as a guest who may leave the parents soon.

The condition of a marriageable girl is very precarious. She is often chastised for her early growth. The father has to travel to different places in search of a suitable groom for her, sometimes in vain. Thus the girl is always considered as a burden. There is a convention in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society that how-so-ever well-to-do a man may be, he has a lower position compared to the boy's father at the time of his girl's marriage. The selection of match is an important event for a marriage. There are some humorous and interesting proverbs on this subject. One such is चेल्लेक चोवंचाक गेल्लोलो चेल्लो लग्न कोर्नु आयलो (The boy who went to see the girl returned after marriage). Another proverb of the same category is चेल्लि चंदि दोळे कुरड्डे (The girl is beautiful but the eyes are blind).

The picture we get of a female child is one where she is looked down upon as a rival to the parents and a liability to the family. Once a girl is married she is expected to adjust herself to a life in her husband's house. Normally no girl is welcomed back in her parents' house. Each girl is aware of this fact and what the proverb has to say in this connection is -चेल्लि बुदवंति दवलो अस्सिल्ले कडे दायि सोद्दीता, दायि अस्सिल्ले कडे दवलो सोद्दीता. (The girl is very intelligent, she searches laddle in the place of a spoon and a spoon in the place of a laddle). She does not want to work at her new household. Hence she spends her time in search of a laddle and a spoon. Adjusting in a new house is not very easy for a newly married girl. The greatest problem is the mother-in-law. To overcome this, the proverb has to say-

अंदण विंदण ना गो धुवे जिब्बेन सरि जा  
मायंक मावांक मारून भायर घालतल्लि जा

(O, my daughter, I have nothing to give you in dowry,  
be agreeable with sweet tongue and expel the in-laws.)

### daughter-in-law

Though the daughter is an unwanted guest in the family, the freedom she enjoys in her own house is not provided to her when she plays the role of a daughter-in-law in her husband's house. The daughter is allowed to play while the daughter-in-law is not. She is expected only to do the household duties. The daughter relishes preparation of milk, rice, sugar etc. while the daughter-in-law eats a preparation of curd, millet and salt. Thus the positions of a daughter and a daughter-in-law are different. The discrepancy between the status of a daughter and that of a daughter-in-law is the subject matter of some of the Konkani proverbs. One such proverb is - सुन्रेक ह्या दीवाळेक या दीवाळक, धुळेक ह्या शुक्रारा त्या शुक्रारा (For the daughter-in-law,for this Diwali and that Diwali, and for a daughter, this Friday and that Friday). The proverb चेल्लेक उल्लेयलेले सुन्रेक गांगता (The scoldings addressed to the daughter affect the daughter-in-law.) also refers to this discrimination.

There are a number of proverbs in Konkani in which the war between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law is reflected. Yet, a daughter-in-law however good she may be, is said to be in need of a mother-in-law, to learn the traditional ways. After marriage, instead of her affectionate mother, the daughter-in-law lives under her mother-in-law's control. The proverb मांय सांगता सुन्रेक बुद्धि आपण खत्ता घोड्या गांडि (The mother-in-law teaches the daughter-in-law, but she herself eats the excrement of the horse.) refers to this rule of the mother-in-law on her daughter-in-law. As a

daughter-in-law she has more rights and obligations to perform. Her field of activities shifts from freedom to formality. Lack of freedom tempts her to quarrel with her mother-in-law and to compare her actions with that of her mother-in-law. This attitude of a daughter-in-law is well pictured in the Konkani proverb- मांयि बेरसूनु जेवता सून पोणु जेवता (The mother-in-law eats sitting on a chair and the daughter-law eats lying on a bed). The mother-in-law always thinks about her daughter-in-law but the daughter-in-law does not care for her. मांयि मरता सुन्ने ठांय, सून मरता मिंडा ठांय (The mother-in-law lives for her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law lives for her paramour). The mother-in-law always thinks of the food that has been cooked but unlike her mother-in-law the daughter-in-law always thinks of her beauty. This attitude is well brought out in the Konkani proverb- सून चोयता कब्रडेंतु मांयि चोयता मडकेंतु (The daughter-in-law looks in the mirror while the mother-in-law looks in the vessel). When such a position continues it results in the quarrel between the two. The Konkani proverb घा जाण एक्कडे दीस काडतले दोन बायलां मितीं जायना (Ten men can live together but two women cannot.) when applied to this position, the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law wage war with each other. The real situation is pictured in the following proverb beautifully - अड्डलि मोळ्ळि मांयि मेल्लि सुन्नेक बुद्धि आयली (The scraper was broken, the mother-in-law died and the daughter-in-law was enlightened). If the mother-in-law had remembered that once she was also a daughter-in-law, this would not have happened. The Konkani proverb मायंक सुनेपण उड्गासु जायना (The mother-in-law does not remember the days when she was a daughter-in-law.) refers to this. The maximum forbearance on the part of the

daughter-in-law keeps her in control, yet sometimes when her feelings are terribly hurt she reacts in such a way that she ceases to think even of herself. The proverb मायंवेरि जोप्पुनु चेरडाक पेट्टु (Out of the anger for the mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law beats her child) very well explains the psychological condition of the daughter-in-law at this juncture.

The time always changes. It does not wait for any body. At one time the mother-in-law ruled the house. But at another time the daughter-in-law gets the upper hand. This situation is handled by her conveniently and what the proverb has to say is - एकु कालु मायंचो जाल्यारि एकु कालु सुत्रेचो (Once, the mother-in-law was superior, now, the daughter-in-law is superior). When the daughter-in-law becomes the supreme power at the house she never thinks of the convenience of her mother-in-law. The Konkani proverb refers to this condition in the following manner - रुचेक रवराज्य जाल्यारि मायक वाणस्तीरगा पाटु (If the daughter-in-law gets the superiority, the mother-in-law does not even get the clothing). As a daughter-in-law, she is described as more sober, more quiet, and more co-operative. She has to maintain the balance of her relationship with her mother-in-law. But as a daughter-in-law she wants the authority, the responsibility, the honour, the power of governing the whole family and above all a complete monopoly over family matters which the mother-in-law enjoys. When the mother-in-law dies, when the daughter-in-law's bindings and limitations end, and when she gets the position of the mother-in-law, she really realises what her mother-in-law was. In the above proverb cited earlier अड्डाळे मोळिळ गांयि मेल्लि etc. the latter part रुचेक वुद्धि आयली refers to this position

of a daughter-in-law. The unhealthy relations are well brought out here. To avoid this unhealthy atmosphere the Konkani proverb has to say - *स्थांतरेन मोरका, मांयि नत्तिल्ले कडे चेल्लेक दीवंका* (The old woman should die, the girl should be given in marriage, where there is no mother-in-law).

These proverbs carry a clear picture of the day- to-day life of a daughter-in-law in the company of her mother-in-law of an average Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family. The mother-in-law has more power, responsibilities and obligations than the daughter-in-law, which the latter does not understand. The social control and law and order of a mother-in-law on her daughter-in-law is a theme of some of the Konkani proverbs.

## **Husband and Wife**

Man and woman are the two important parts of the society. Without one, the other does not attain perfection. Man is superior in every aspect since he symbolises Brahma, the lord of lords. But woman is best in tending to bring prosperity. She is the combination of Lakshmi and Saraswati, goddess of wealth and learning. The Konkani proverbs reveal the folk feelings about women, their wishes, desires and aspirations. These present a proportionate picture of woman's deep-rooted values, her own images and ideals, her conflicts and burdens, her prejudices and fears. She is revered as a mother, loved most as a wife. The terms "sahadharmini" or "ardhangini" at their best illustrate the position of an Indian woman in her family. No doubt she is the better half of the man. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society is not an exception to this. The Konkani proverbs

present an exhaustive picture of women. Woman here appears in various moods and forms— as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, mother-in- law. The position described in these proverbs is mainly that of married women.

The position of a husband counts heavily for a woman's position in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society. Domestic and economic rights are allotted according to the position of her husband. A woman without a husband is like the lamp without the flame. Nobody cares for her. The proverb runs thus- बमणाक नक्का जल्लेलि बायल गावंचे लोकाकपि नक्का (An unwanted wife is hated by the public also). A woman's security, regard, position and privileges are closely linked with her married position. In marriage she is supposed to be loyal to her husband. The chastity of a woman is well praised in the Konkani proverb - पतिव्रता बायल घरा दीवो सी (A chaste woman is like the lamp of the house). Woman finds her fulfilment in absolute surrender to the man she marries. By marriage, the fate of a woman is determined to a great extent. Marriage is a very important event in the life of a woman. According to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins the aims of marriage are said to be Dharma, Praja and Rati. Sex is given only third position in this system of marriage. Marriage is a sacrament according to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The sacred rites performed in the marriage ceremony make this ritual to be considered as sacred. The individual is called upon to make marriage a success by means of compromise and adjustment. This adjustment described in the scriptures -

यदेतद्वदयं तव तदरतु हृदयं मम

यदेतद्वदयं मम तदरतु हृदयं तव

is well-established in the Konkani proverbs. Marriage after all is a social contract between man and woman or husband and wife, the main members of the society. The husband and the wife after marriage have to adjust their tastes and temper, their ideals and interests, instead of breaking with each other when they find that these differ. Both the positions are seen pictured in the Konkani proverbs -

घोवा बायलेचे एक चित्त चिंचे पत्रारि नीद

(If the husband and the wife agree with each other, they can sleep even on a tamarind leaf.)

घोवा बायलेले मन एक असल्यारि कांडणाचेरि नीद पडता

(If the husband and the wife agree with each other they can sleep even on a pestle.)

घोवा बायलेचे एक चित्त मडके जाता सीत

(When the husband and the wife agree with each other, there is rice in the vessel.)

बारपडचे मामाक तेरपडची बायल

(For a man who scores twelve, a wife who scores thirteen.)

To maintain such a harmonious position, both the husband and the wife have to practise liberality and both are called upon to overcome the incompatibility of the other. If they are not ready to practise this, they will have to suffer the adverse effects in the life. The proverb says - घोवु पिस्सो बायल पिस्सि घराक जल्लो बिळ्कूटो (The husband is mad, the wife is mad, and the home is perished). If the husband and the wife are not aware of their duties, the family is desolated. If they are dutiful and live in proper adjustment the family flourishes as is indicated in the proverb घोवान जडले बायलेन

जाले घर थर जाले (The husband earned, the wife managed and the home flourished). If the husband earns, the wife looks after the children, the family flourishes in a good, sound atmosphere.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins closely followed the Vedic culture from time immemorial. According to Vedas a fine, efficient, progeny of a highly intellectual, moral and spiritual nature is aimed at, the conjugal relation should be very sound. This valuable idea of the scriptures is implied in the Konkani proverbs connected with husband-wife relationship. The mantras of Saptapadi ceremony followed in the marriage rituals of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins explain the relation that should exist between the husband and the wife. They teach that both should be one in thought and deed. The above proverbs also express the same ideas in a different style.

The ideal of Pativrata is considered to be the real merit of the wife, according to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The proverb runs thus - पतिव्रता बायल घरा दीवो री (A chaste wife is like the lamp of the house). A chaste wife is the fortune of the house. She is always like the shadow of her husband as said in the Vyasa Samhita -

छायेवानुगता खच्छा सर्थीव हितकर्मसु  
दासीवदिष्टकार्येषु भार्या भर्तुः सदा भवेत् - १-२-१९

Such a wife is, as said in the above proverb, a light of the family. A high place has been assigned to her. Here all the darkness is wiped out. This is only the bright side of the picture. There is also the dark side. Proverbs always draw a real picture of the society. Where the husband and

the wife are not in harmony what will be the ultimate result? The proverb has to say - आपण तरी मरत बायले रांड करीत (He wants to see his wife as a widow even at the risk of his life). If the husband and the wife are not in harmony, there will always be quarrels in the house and when the extreme point is reached the husband even thinks of committing suicide, which is reflected in the proverb given above. Another example is घोवा परीस बायल मोटी, मूसळ घेवून लागली फाटी (The wife was stronger than the husband, and she ran after the husband with a pestle). If the wife is stronger than the husband she beats him with the pestle. When wives are stronger than their husbands the husbands have to bear them silently. That a husband is always frightened of his wife, is evident from the following proverb - राना गेल्यारि वागा भय घरां आयल्यारि बायले भय (In the forest he is afraid of the bear and in the house he is afraid of his wife). In this proverb, a wife is compared to a wild animal. When the husband does not like the wife he always finds fault with her as is said in the proverb - बायल नक्का जल्लेल्याक तक्कांत फत्तोरु एत्ता (He who dislikes his wife finds stone in the curds). The life becomes miserable and if somebody tries to console them, the following proverb considers him a fool— बम्मूणु बायलेलो उस्सो मदै वत्तल्लो पिस्सो (He who interferes in the quarrel of the husband and the wife is a fool).

This is the reason why the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins prefer a wife who is weaker than the husband in all respects. If the husband thinks it proper to ruin his wife, he can do it very easily. The proverbs बायलेक मारका जल्यारि बेस्सल्लि माणायिं नुप्पूरो वे? (Is not the wooden seat enough to kill a wife?) and बायलो आनी मातिये कोळसे समचि (Wives and earthern

vessels are equal.) refer to this. The wife is as brittle as an earthern pot. The status of a wife is always subservient to her husband. The husband must take care of his wife, provide her with food and clothing and protect her in all respects. The following proverbs explicitly express this idea.

मेरंगले बायलेक कपड दिवंचाक कोणेयि संगुका वे? (Should anyone advise me to offer a saree to my wife?). The Konkani proverb हाताक घेंरु हळाळ्या क्षण बायल जायनी, पोट्टा उब्जल्या क्षण चेंडु जायनी (A woman does not become a wife at the moment when one receives her hand in marriage and the embryo does not become a child at the moment of fertilisation).

The age-worn idea of woman being a non-entity is still persistent in some degree in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin families. This shows male-domination in the society. Again the proverb बयला थायु रानी पर्लातु (The women's place is always near the hearth.) states that women were not given their proper rights. They were only the wealth of the hearth. It is only the husband who can relieve a wife from distress. In these circumstances it is quite natural that for making her position better, a woman tries to please her husband as much as possible. Yet in some cases the wives take upper hand in various measures. One of them is well pictured in the following proverbs:

वोल्लि रवणि वोल्लि शेणि, जेवंचाक आयल्या बायले भयणि,  
रांदप जाले तत्कर्णी,  
सुकिक शेणि सुकिक रवणि, जेवंचाक आयल्या बामणा भयणि,  
रांदप जायत वे संजे पुणि ?

(The hearth is wet, the cow-dung-cakes are wet, wife's sister comes for a feast, the preparations are very fast.

The hearth is hot, the cow-dung-cakes are dry, husband's sister comes for the dinner, preparations are very slow.)

A comparative approach in the above proverbs regarding the relations of the husband and the wife is very interesting. The wife likes to treat only her relations in an appealing manner while the relations of her husband are not treated with such fervour. These proverbs draw a real picture of the general character of the unsatisfied wives of a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family. The husband is forced to bear all such actions of his wife silently. His freedom is somewhat affected as is indicated in the proverb - बायल जल्यारि पय्यांक संकाळ, चेर्डु जल्यारि तोंडांतु मत्ति (After marriage, the man is in chains, when a child is born his mouth is filled with earth.) The wife is always a binding for her husband. The proverb तर्नि बायल पोट्टांत जाळ (If the wife is young, the husband's mind is afflicted.) can be quoted as an example.

The husband-wife relationship was considered as sacred in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin families. A wife cannot remarry if her husband dies but the husband marries another woman if his wife is not alive. But he is warned against this practice as seen in the Konkani proverb - व्होळिं मेल्लि म्होणु केल्लि धाकटी तिका लागली उबशी रोगटी (The first wife died and he married again, the second wife was ailing). A Gowda Saraswat Brahmin husband is also warned against polygamy in the proverb - व्होळिं बल्लावि म्होणु धाकटी केल्यारि ती पायाक गू पुरस्सूनु एत्ता (Since the first wife was bad and he married a second time, the second wife came with excrement on her legs). The position of the husband counts heavily for a wife's position. To a woman domestic and

economic rights are allotted according to the position of her husband. She finds her fulfilment in absolute surrender to the man she marries.

### Widowhood

In a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community widowhood is considered as a great curse for a woman. She has to put off all her garments and ornaments which she used to wear while her husband was alive. But with the death of her husband she wears only simple costumes. She appears to lose all her glamour after the death of her husband. Her head is shaven and she is looked down upon by the society. The proverb, छायु मंत्याकायि बोड तस्सिल्लै दुःख चड (The grief of shaving the head is greater than that of the death of her husband.) reveals this custom along with the mental agony of a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin widow. Widow remarriage was disallowed and the widows themselves were not ready to get married at a second time. The proverb बोडके लग्नाक रासु विघ्न (Thousands of obstacles for the marriage of a widow.) refers to this system of the society. The fate of a widow was utterly desolate and without hope. It was a disregard for a woman to be a widow because she had to suffer much at the cruel hands of the society. A widow was neither allowed to welcome a newly married couple nor to take part in any social function or ceremony. This cruel treatment of the society is well expressed in the proverb - कानफूल नतिल्ले रडेक मंजेश्वर राष्ट्र इत्याक ? (How can a widow without ear ornaments desire for the festival at Manjeswaram?). In a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society though there are so many disadvantages as far as a widow is concerned, she is treated well in some cases where she

is supposed to be very much useful for the household work. The proverb म्हांतारि बोड्कि वड्यांक उपकारता (The old widow helps in preparing the cakes.) lays stress on this point and reveals the bright side of the life of a widow in a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin family. The widows who are not loyal to her husbands indulge in unhealthy connections with other men of the society and this can be treated as the dark aspect of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society as far as widows are concerned. Such women do not allow others to live peacefully as is indicated in the Konkani proverb - आपण रांड शिंदाळ जाल्यारि भावा बायलेक पातयेना (The widowed woman does not trust her sister-in-law). Such women mar the happiness of the family.

On the basis of the study of the different aspects of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society it can be asserted that an ancient Indian family with a joint family system was in practice among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. As far as the family relationships are concerned, an ideal form of an average family in all its aspects can be seen reflected in the Konkani proverbs.

## Chapter - III

# Customs and Manners

The society reflected in Konkani proverbs always gave importance to the state of spiritual revelation. All their customs and manners are based on this spiritual revelation. The ancestors of the Konkani people were originally learned sages and at a later stage these sages were given the status of Guru, the head of the religious sects. Initiation was given to the disciples by the Guru and this act of initiation is considered as an important custom in the society. References to this custom can be seen in the Konkani proverbs.

### Guru and Sishya

The role of Guru is within the society who knows the inter-connectedness of the Supreme Being and the Self. The Guru is supposed to be an elevated person who removes the ignorance, and kindles the fire of knowledge in the hearts of his pupils. गिरत्प्राणं गुणार्थुपदिशति धर्मग् says Vachaspatyam. Yajnavalkya is of opinion (1/34) that the Guru is the spiritual parent of a pupil who receives mantra or prayer from him which helps the pupil in his future life. The elevation of a Brahmana to the status of a Guru at the head of a religious community represents a comparatively late stage in the development of an Indian religious sect and the Konkani people follow this sect. They always revered

their Dharma-Guru and acted according to his instructions. The genealogy of Guru-Sishya speaks of a tradition which is the culmination of perfection in providing the right kind of atmosphere in the most important aspect of life. The commitment of the Gurus to pass on to posterity all they knew was remarkable. They did not consider themselves to be above others and others to be lesser mortals. They took their disciples into their fold in achieving the common task of preserving the Vedas. The Konkanis are by origin the followers of the *Rigveda* and they followed the path of initiation and believed in the Guru-Sishya relationship. According to them without a preceptor knowledge cannot be attained. Hence the proverb गूरु नातिल्लै विद्या ना (There is no education without a preceptor.). Guru evolves a special form of esoteric instruction for their pupils. Moksha can be attained only by denial of Trivarga. The systematic denial of the personal rights of a man and fixing his mind on a single irreducible remnant of his personality, the Atman, can only be pursued by the help of Guru.

The Guru is to be respected by the chelas. The Konkani term चेलो (boy) originally belonged to the category of chela (Sishya) which throws ample light on the cultural activities of the people and their strong belief in Guru-Sishya relationship. The Konkani proverb गुरुत्व नतिल्यांक तिन्नीय एक्कडे (Those who have no respect for preceptor, always perish.) drawn in a negative sense, gives the same meaning as is desired in Guru-Sishya relationship. One who does not respect his Guru is said to be a great offender. The Sishya has to obey his Guru implicitly and has to keep a relationship of specific spiritual and psychological nature. Manu says - आचार्यो ब्राह्मणो मूर्तिः (Manusmriti 2/226). In Indian tradition

Guru has always been held in high esteem. He plays a highly positive and active role in the society. The Guru-Sishya relationship is the only authentic meeting between two human beings stripped of their masks within the magic circle of Guru-Sishya relationship. The essential element of this relationship is the disciple's attempt to recover the sense of wholeness. It follows a complete psychic reorientation, a complete surrender of the disciple's will. It is a relationship however, a perfectly genuine psychic reality which satisfies the Indians, especially the Konkani people. It expresses the product of shared conditions. This is well marked in the proverbs- गुरुगणि विद्या गुरु मत्यारि (The education given by the preceptor reacted on himself.) and शिष्यांगेले अपराधाक गुरुक दंडु (The preceptor is punished for the faults of his disciples.). The most subtle form of interdependence is pointed out in these proverbs. Such proverbs in Konkani throw light on the importance of Guru in the life of a Brahmin youth of the society.

### Dark aspects of the social life

No society in any age could possibly claim to be without the elements which are tabooed on moral or religious grounds and the one reflected in the Konkani proverbs presents no exception to this rule. The circumstances of instability of life coupled with easily exploitable ignorance and credulity of society nourished much of the ills. The social evils are exposed and have been brought out in the Konkani proverbs in their naked form. There is also advice given in abundance to ward off these evils as much as possible.

While passing through the proverbs we note the indications to the world of sins and crimes, where we frequently notice grim instances of all sorts of roguery and foul play. In this dark world of society we can see people with double dealing and selfishness. There are people who are sweet-tongued, crafty and obsequious, favourites, greedy merchants, fraudulent ascetics, licentious men, expert thieves, avaricious and cunning women. According to *Sukraniti* one should give up by mind, body and speech the following ten sins: envy, stealing, illegitimate passions, depravity, harshness, untruthfulness, divulgence of secrets, evil design, atheism and perverseness (*Sukraniti* III/13-15) because, only by practising virtues one can earn merits. It is a fact that the Konkani people always opposed the life of sins. The proverbs are particular about this and they tell that the sins must not be repeated. एकट्यान गायि मारली म्होणु दुसरयान वासूर मारचे न्हय (If one has murdered the cow, it is not proper to kill the calf also). This is an advice against the anti-social elements. A person is supposed to serve as far as possible, people who are in distress, even an enemy who is harmful. The results of others' prosperity must not be envied. The proverb has to say जाळा व्याधीक ओखद ना (There is no medicine for envy). The ailment of envy cannot be treated, there is no medicine for it. This is a warning for the envious people. There are a number of such warnings in these proverbs to remove the darkness from the society so that it becomes a healthy society.

To keep control over the speech, to speak good, moderate, consistent and sweet words, is always appealing. This makes man happy in his dealings. The proverb says - करतल्लो चड उल्लेयना उल्लेयतल्लो चड करना (Great braggarts

re little doers). One who brags always does little. This is small hint to the people who like to distinguish between good and bad members of the society. Further the proverb शोट्या नाण्याक इगळगु चहु (False coin shines brighter.) clearly indicates that all that glitters is not gold. This teaches us that one should be careful about those persons who practise double dealings. Some proverbs deal with persons whose actions are opposite to what they speak. The proverbs-

बृहस्पति सो उल्लेयता शोणां तोंड घालता

(He speaks like Brihaspati, the preceptor of Gods, but acts otherwise.)

सांगचे पुराण आनी खांवचे शोण

(He gives lectures on Puranas, but eats the cow-dung.)

राम नाम जपता कंसान गळो कापता

(He utters the name of Rama repeatedly, but harms others silently.)

उल्लोवंचाक उवळुमारु करच्याक आंगचोरु

(He speaks well but does not act accordingly.)

refer to such persons. Nice words and good actions are always welcomed because they attract ordinary persons and give relief to them. The proverbs say:

एक उतरान मोळ्ळेले मन धा उतरानि रारि जायना

(The mind hurt by one word will not become normal by ten words.)

खोऱ्हून उल्लोवंचाकयि वेंचूनु उल्लोवंचे चांग

(It is better to utter a few words than to utter sarcastic words.)

बडिड मोळ्ळ्यारि दोरियेन बंदचे मन मोळ्ळ्यारि कित्यान बंदचे

(The broken stick can be tied with a string, but how can a broken mind be tied.)

These give a sound warning that good speech always makes good relations. One should always attend to the likes and dislikes of others and minister them in such a way to give satisfaction to each and everyone. The proverb वारया प्रमाण सूप धर्लक जाय (The winnowing basket may be put in the direction of the wind.) in a way indicates the same action.

There are people who are crooked, cruel, barbarous, severe and harmful to others. Some people derive pleasure at the ruin of others and even indulge in such acts which are harmful to others. The proverbs -

आपण खायना दुर्स्सेरयाकयि दीना

(He neither eats himself nor allows others to eat.)

आपण शेण खाल्नु दुर्स्सेरया तोंडाक हातु पुरस्तुचें

(He himself eats the cow-dung and rubs the hand on the face of others.)

आपलें नांक कापूनु पेल्यांक अपशकुन कोरचें

(To bring ill-omen to others by cutting one's own nose.)

आपण बुड्डता दुर्स्सेरयाक पोटळता

(While drowning oneself, one holds others.)

refer to such persons who make others victims of their harmful actions. The strong advice of the society to such persons is - फाटीरि मारलें तरीकय पोटारि मारन्हयें (You can beat anyone, but do not deprive him of his morsel.) with a warning that दुर्स्सेरया खातिर फोंडु कळ्ळो पायु निस्सोर्नु आपण पोळ्ळो (He who made a trap for others, fell into it himself.). All these proverbs make the people aware of the fact that one must reap the results of one's good or bad actions.

The Konkani proverbs always warn the people against the vices such as smoking, drinking of liquors, eating of betel leaves etc. which produce adverse results on the health of the people. All these are injurious to health. Proverbs to this effect are -

दीडि योडतल्या ताळे पळ्य, पुडिडि ताणतल्या दोळे पळ्य, पान खातल्या आंगण पळ्य

(A smoker can be identified by his throat, a sniffer can be identified by his eyes and a chewer of betel leaves can be identified by seeing his courtyard).

मत्त घरां रिगत्यारि वुद्धि घर सोणु वत्ता

(When toddy enters the house, the reasoning power gets lost.)

समुद्रां बुद्धनु मेल्लेत्याकयि सोरयां बुद्धनु मेल्लेले चड

(Those who are immersed in toddy are more in number than those who are drowned in the ocean.)

The adverse results of such vices are implied in these sayings which advise the people to be cautious against these social evils.

Men are rare who can openly declare their vices. Hence the proverbs advise that man should forsake the undesirable by finding them out.

नेले नातिल्या उदकांत वोळ्यु-हये नेपु नसिल्ले काळकांत वोरंकु-हये

(Do not enter into unfathomable waters, do not walk into dense darkness.)

फतरा मूळात पोळ्योलो हातु हळू काडका

(The hand which is under a big stone must be removed with great care.)

Sleep, sluggishness, fear, anger, laziness and procrastination are six vices which bring darkness in a society. There are a number of proverbs which unveil the different aspects of laziness or absence of action. These are coined in a beautiful manner. Some of them are -

आलेसा तांड रे होडे, हांव सायबा भुरगो मगा

आलेसा जेवंक यो रे, हांव सायबा मानाय मगा

(O, man, row the boat, I am only a child,

O, man, take your food, I am ready to eat.)

आळशा भिकणां भाजि रे, आळशी म्हणटा हरवींचि गोड

(If the lazy boy is advised to roast the jack-nuts, he will say that raw nuts are sweeter.)

आळशाचो दीसु सरना काम करतल्याक रातीय पावना

(For a lazy man the day seems to be endless and for one who works, even the night is not sufficient.)

After explaining the different aspects of laziness, the concluding remarks are given in the proverbs - प्रयत्न करनस्तना प्रारब्धाक रणये (Without working hard don't cry over your destiny.) and कष्ट कळ्ळेल्या सिवाय इष्ट मेळना (Desires cannot be fulfilled without toil). Another proverb observes that such unsocial elements which bring darkness in a society and restrict the progress of the society will be of no use to anybody. The proverb is एरंड वाडलो म्होणु पटियेक उपकारना (A castor tree is not used for making furniture). There are persons in a society who in spite of their weaknesses always find fault with other people's weaknesses. The Konkani proverbs

आपल्या खूब्यांक रडतात, दुस्सेरयाच्या खूब्यांक हासतात

(He is afflicted because of his own heels but censures the heels of others.)

अपणाले पथ्या पोदातूले कुच्छाळे रोणु दुरसेरया परया मूळातूले सासम सोंदीता

(He looks for the mustard under the legs of others, while he himself is afflicted by the ash-gourd under his legs.)

दुरसेरयाच्या दोळ्यांतूलें कुसळ दिसता, आपल्या दोळ्यांतूलें मुसळ दिसना

(He looks for the particle in the eyes of others, while he himself does not see the pestle in his own eyes.)

Explain in a beautiful figurative language the bad qualities of such persons with a warning to them that - दुरसेरयाचि करता नेदा ताच्यान मेळता अवदा (He mocks at others but receives dishonour in return.) The proverbs छी: सूण्या म्हळ्यारि पोट भोर्नु गाडि (What a shame! Even if you call him a dog he asks for stomach full of food.) and रांड म्हणा कूळ म्हणा पोट भोर्नु गाड्या (Even if you call him names he asks for stomach-full of food.) give a clear picture of the shameless persons in the society. The logic of such persons is explained in another proverb - लज्जक गंत्यारि पेंजंक मुट्टु (If you go for the feeling of shame, you won't be able to get food). These people believe that shamefulness brings to them great disadvantages.

Of the various social evils, theft, which was treated as a great punishable crime is described in these proverbs in great detail. चोराक जीब घटिट (The thief's tongue is hard.) and चोरांक ताळो व्हाडु (Thieves have a strong voice.)—both the proverbs give an indication to the extraordinary capacities of the thieves in their work. Covered with black veil, and well-equipped with their paraphernalia, they set out for their job during dark nights. This is well expressed in

the proverb चोरांक चंदीण्या हुस्को. (Moon-light makes a thief restless). This proverb does not need any further explanation because every one knows the fact that thieves do not like the moonlight, which causes hindrance in their job. After breaking open the house, the thief enters in it with all confidence as if he is in his own house and comes out with rich booty. All thieves adhere to the same means. The proverb चोरा घुट्टु चोराक गोत्तु (Only a thief knows the secret of a thief.) refers to this aspect. The proverbs चोरा गांडीत चोर हागलो (The thief excreted in the anus of the other thief.) and चोर चोरांक गवाय (A thief is a witness for another thief.) — throw some light on the groups of thieves. Yet another proverb चोराचे भय चोराक जाराचे भय जाराक (A thief is afraid of another thief and a paramour is afraid of another paramour.) refers to the absence of unity and distrust since they are indulged in an action which is anti-social. Their minds always go against them in this action and they always think like this. The proverb has to say - चोरा मन चोराक खत्ता (The thief feels prick of conscience). Further the family members of a thief also must be prepared to bear the risk caused by the anti-social work done by the thieves. The proverb चोरा आवय हरद्यांत रडता (The mother of a thief cries in the inner heart.) refers to the mother of a thief who is always sorrowful due to the heinous crimes of her son. The thief always carries out his job in his own village since he can do it easily, because he is acquainted with his village. The proverb says - चोरि करची अपणाले गावांत, भीक मागची दुस्सेरयाले गावांत. (If you steal, steal in your own village, if you beg, beg in a foreign village). Another proverb warns the thieves by saying that चोरुक शिकल्यारि निष्पोवंचाक शिककुका (If one practises stealing, he must learn to hide also). After

describing all this psychology of a thief, the dark aspect of his profession is well expressed in the proverb - चोराये मालु डाळान क्षत्तो (Stolen property is snatched by the Chandala.) thus establishing the reward of Karma that one who is addicted to theft will have to suffer. The proverb चोर हत्तात दिल्ली (Handed over the key of the safe to a thief.) indicates that a thief cannot be trusted and if at all a thief is appointed as a watcher of the treasure no doubt it will surely be lost.

### Dress and Ornaments

The general state of prosperity and consequently luxury of the society tempt the members of the community to own fine costumes and rich ornaments particularly for the women-folk. These women have a characteristic love for these costumes and ornaments. A highly developed and sophisticated view regarding the dress and decoration is worth mentioning. Women are fond of wearing clothes of gay colours and varied designs. There are references in the Konkani proverbs regarding dress and ornaments and the way in which they are preserved. The proverbs पैटियेंतूले पट्ट्या गप्पड (The silk saree which is kept in the box.) and न्हेररसूक तिल्याक पट्ट्या कप्पड (Wear the silk saree where there is nothing else to wear.) show how these people looked at the valuable silk dress especially sarees. These were kept in special boxes or cupboards and were used only at times of need.

The garments commonly worn by people are 'Dhoti' for men and 'Saree' for women. There are proverbial references of Dhoti (धोत्र) and saree (कप्पड) as for example धोत्र व्होड जल्यारीयि गोत्र व्होड जाता ये ? (If the Dhoti is long

will the clan become big?) and नवे कप्पड हाडचे फूडे पर्ने कप्पड रण्णींतु घल्ले (The old saree was thrown into the hearth before a new saree was purchased). Both these proverbs are often used for showing the extravagancy of men and women respectively. Another kind of saree women wear is तोडोपु. The proverb राण शेणीली तोडोपु पोर्नि जावंची म्होणु ना (The saree from Ran Shenoi does not become old.) refers to this form of dress. The men wear turbans as is evident in the proverb - नर्सपा मुंडासु पुर्सपा बोडाक (The turban of Nursappa, on the head of Pursappa).

The ladies loved ornaments to excess and their fancy for them went to the extent that they adorned their limbs with them. The women including girls accomplished their personal adornment with special care and elegance bespeaking of high aesthetic sense. This was done by means of various kinds of ornaments like gold necklaces, pearl strings, necklaces made of coral beads and different gems, ear ornaments of numerous models with jewels, golden ear leaf etc. An indication of the use of ruby gem is seen in the proverb गेल्लोलो मानु परत येना, भेत्तिल्ले माणीक सम जायना (Lost self-respect cannot be restored, broken ruby cannot be repaired). Here the self-respect of a Konkani man is compared to the ruby which is enough to show that all the members of the Konkani society were full of self-respect. The proverb नांक पशि मत्ति जड (The pearl on the nose is bigger than the nose.) shows that ornaments for nose were a common feature. Kankana in the proverb हाता कंकणाक आरसी कित्याक- (What is the need of a mirror to look at the bangles?) refers to different varieties of bangles worn. These were sometimes tastefully wrought with gems also. Finger rings often set with saphire and emerald or other gems were

widely popular both among men and women. The saying दियक फतोरु दखरत्या वरि (As a valuable stone, fixed on the ring.) can be quoted as an example.

Anklets were commonly worn by the ladies. The proverb- पाय धूयि म्हळ्यारि पायंजणाक भोल इतें ? (When you ask her to wash her feet she asks for the price of the anklets.) is an evidence to the fact that anklets were used for decorating the feet by women and girls of the Konkani community. Gold generally was treated as very valuable, and each member longed for gold whether he could afford it or not. The proverb- आपण नागडी कन्नाक बुगडी (She is naked, but she wears ornaments in her ears.) can be quoted as an example. That gold was treated as wealth is evident from the proverbs -

भंगरा सूव म्हाणु पोट्टांतु घालु घेवंची वे ?

(Does anybody thrust a needle into the stomach, since it is made of gold?)

हातान उब्बारनत्तिल्ले राण भंगरान बांदतचि क्हांवली

(The heavy touch-stone was carried when it was covered with gold.)

कानु खावंचे भंगार नक्का मानु वळकुवंचो मुंडासु नक्का

(There is no need of gold which attacks the ear and the turban, which is a mark of respect.)

Special feature of personal adornment is the sophisticated art of hair dressing. Tying of the locks of hair in the form of a rounded bun or braid was common. The locks of hair were sometimes twisted into one or two braids especially by the girls of the Konkani community. Hair was dressed with a comb, which has been used by these people since

very olden days. The proverb केस अस्सिल्याक कसीयि शेंडि बंधुयात (Those who have got hair can adopt any hair style.)- refers to this habit. Flowers were used frequently to adorn the braid. The proverbs फूल दिवंचे कडे पाकळि पुणि दी (Give at least a petal in the place of a flower.), फूल विकिकल्ले कडे वावळ्यो विकुन्हयें (Do not sell the strings where the flowers are sold.) etc. are evidences to the fact that flowers were used often for braiding and beautifying the hair.

## Food and Drinks

Importance of good and regulated diet was stressed in the Konkani society for health and beauty. These people were very particular about the Smriti injunctions on matters of eating and drinking and they expiated for a lapse in this regard. The non-vegetarian food is totally avoided. The proverb - पोटाक ना म्होणु सुंगट भाजूनु खावप ना (Even if there is no food, do not eat the roasted shrimps.) can be cited as an example which denotes that one should not eat the non-vegetarian food even if there is no other food. Further the proverb मस्साळि विकतल्यालो अप्पो नक्का (Do not buy the cakes sold by a fish-vendor.) denotes that eating of fish was not practised and was banned for the Konkani people. These people always believe that diet has something to do with the temperament of man. The non-vegetarian food is treated as असात्विक and hence it is banned. But rare instances can be seen where fish was used by these people in some areas. Hence the proverbs -

आंग भिज्जल्ले बगैर नुस्ते धरूक जायना

(You cannot catch fish without moistening your hands.)  
एका अव्यांतूलि आयदनां एक वत्ता दुदाक एक वत्ता झळक्याक

(From the vessels of one mould, one goes for boiling milk, the other, for cooking fish.)

कुसरत्से मासळेक पिककल्लि चींच

(Ripe tamarind for rotten fish.)

मासळे कुळ्याक करड्या चींप

(Spoon made of coconut shell for the earthern vessel used for cooking fish.) etc.

The dietic preparation of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins mainly consisted of येज referred to in the proverbs लज्जेक जेत्यारि पेज्जक मुट्टु (If you show modesty, you will not get the rice gruel.), येज हूनि जत्यारि आंबले धासु (If the rice gruel is hot, a bite to the tender mango.) etc. Rice-gruel is a wholesome diet of the Konkani people. Their typical favourites are फाळो, सांदण, हित्टु etc. references to which are often found in the proverbs. For example-

पोळे मेज्जूनु जांडाशि जल्तो पाळे मेज्जूनु पॅलेतु जल्तो

(He became an astrologer by counting the rice dosas and became a scholar by counting the waves.)

पोळे काउतत्त्वेक पिषसा काउताल्ले एकली

(For a woman who makes rice dosas, is a woman to remove the mucus from the nose.)

पोळ्यां छिद्र मेज्जिल्लो पॅलितु कि काखन्यां लेक दब्बोलीलो?

(Who is a scholar, he who counts the pores of the rice-dosa or he who keeps the counts of the crows?)

कुल्ले पळवूनु माणायि आनी तोड पळवूनु पोळे

(The wooden seat according to the buttocks and the rice-dosas according to the mouth.)

सूरय खेल्यारि हगता, उकडो खेल्यारि भगता आनी उडदा

पोळे खेल्यारि फुगता

(He discharges faeces if he eats the table rice, if it is boiled rice, he becomes emaciated, and if he eats dosas he gets fattened.)

समग्रांथंय पोळ्यां वट्टीले जल्यारि थोगडे जाणांथंय कायली ओट्टे

(Rice was ground for dosas everywhere, but in some places there is a hole in the cooking pan.)

लोकांगेरि पोळ्यां छिद्र आमगेरि सांदणा छिद्र

(There are pores in the rice-dosas everywhere, but in our house the pores are in the rice-bread.)

प्राणु बुड्डोलो तरि सांदण विस्सरना

(Even one who is on his death bed does not forget the rice-bread.)

पोळो is generally used for breakfast. The substance used for preparing this food is called पीट (ground grains) which is frequently referred to in the proverbs -

पांच नाडि पिट्टाक स नाडि मीट

(For five local measures of ground rice, six local measures of salt.)

पीट खेल्यारि गोरे जायनात उडीदु खेल्यारि काळे जायनात

(Men do not become fair by eating ground rice, and do not become black by eating black-gram.)

गोब्बोरु देक्कनतिल्यान पीट देकले

(One who has not seen the ashes has seen the ground rice.)

There were many bhakshyas, lehyas and peyas in the food taken by the Konkanis. The foremost among the peyas is milk. Reference to milk can be seen in these proverbs as

दूद पळेयलत्तिल्लो पिट्टा उदाक भुलूनु गेल्लो

(One who has not seen milk, has mistaken water of ground rice for the milk.)

दूद पिल्लेले घराक दोष आठोवनक्का

(Do not think ill of the house, from where you have drunk milk.)

दूद पिल्लेले घराचे वाशे मेज्जुनक्का

(Don't count the bamboo poles of the house from where you have drunk milk.)

दूद चोयिल्ले मजराक दुदगळि चोवंचे काम

(The cat which has taken milk, desires for the milk-cake.)

दूद पीवूनु मरतत्याक वीष नक्का

(One who dies by drinking milk does not require poison).

दूद नसत्यारि दुदगळि पाडि आपण नसत्यारि जग पाडि

(Preparation of milk cake is difficult if there is no milk, and the existence of the universe is difficult if we do not exist.)

The milk-cake (दुदगळि) is a special dish of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins which is a sweet-meat. Cookery had developed as an art and a housewife was expected to be proficient in it. रांदूक कळनाशिल्ली वायल न्हयि घोळूक कळनाशिल्लो वादलो न्हय (She is not a woman who does not know the art of cooking and he is not a man who does not know the art of roaming about). Boiled rice was a staple food for the Konkanis. The proverbs

शेळ सित्ताक वारे घल्लेले मणके

(As the cold rice is fanned to remove the heat.)

सीत सिज्जूनु पेज जल्ली

(The rice has become gruel due to overcooking.)

can be quoted as examples.

Grains are brayed in a mortar having an upright hole, stirring up again and again with fingers and striking with a heavy wooden pestle. The proverb वानां पळ्यारि कांडणा पेट्टु (If you are in a mortar it is sure that you will be beaten by the pestle) तुस्सु कंडूनु हत्ता फोड (Scald on the hand due to pounding of the husk) etc. refer to this system. The dust and awn from the rice are removed by winnowing it. References to the winnowing basket can be seen in -

सूपांतूले हासतात, ओल्यांतूले रडतात

(The matter put in the winnowing basket, laughs and that put in the grinder, cries.)

काळोकु सूपांतु भोर्नु उड्डेयल्यारि खर्चता वे ?

(Can the darkness be removed by putting it in a winnowing basket ?)

पर्ने सूप शेणान घटिट म्हांतारो मनीषु न्हाणान घटिट

(The old winnowing basket will become strong if it is smeared with the cow-dung and an old man will become strong by taking an oil-bath.)

भरलेले गाडीक सूप जड वे ?

(Is the winnowing basket heavy for a loaded truck?)

The rice is repeatedly rinsed in pure water. Then the fire place is worshipped with offerings of some grains and the washed rice is poured into the boiling water. When the grains are cooked, the scum passes out from the cooking utensil. There are a number of proverbs referring to this rice starch. Examples are-

निश्चो दिक्कनतित्यान कुर्यां दिक्कोलीं

(One who can't even think of the rice starch, got the boiled rice).

निश्चांत इंगाळे पळ्या वरि करचे

(To act as if the charcoal has fallen in the rice-starch.)

निश्चांत सोकणि पळेयता

(To see a house-lizard in the rice-starch.) etc.

The boiled rice was served with ghee, soup of pulses and auces as also with curds and butter milk. The proverbs-

तूप खत्तल्ले चेरडाले रूप पळेयत्यारि कळता

(The child who eats ghee can be distinguished by seeing its complexion.)

तर्ने चत्तल्लेक रूप नक्का शोळ सिताक तूप नक्का

(There is no need of beauty for a young girl, and there is no need of ghee for cold rice.)

दुदान जीब लसताचि ताक पुळकूनु पित्ता

(One whose tongue is burnt by drinking hot milk, drinks the buttermilk after whiffing.)

पोट भरलेले बामणाक धय्या फतोरु एगा

(The Brahmana with full-stomach finds fault with the curds.)

refer to the above said preparations. The proverbs —

नज्ज जल्लतेत्यानि वळ्यारि मीट थाइ अळणी

(Where a man who is disliked serves the food, it is always saltless.)

दोनि घरचे सोयरयाक दोनीय कडे जेवण ना

(The guest of two houses does not get food from both the houses.)

दाब्ल मुक्कारि शीत मारख्यी

(The laddle comes first and the rice afterwards.)

etc. refer to the act of serving the food. The other rice preparation, equally popular, especially in South India is 'pej', the rice gruel, already referred to earlier. Pickle prepared by seasoning tender mangoes with salt, chilly and spices, which is taken with the boiled rice or rice gruel, is also referred to in the proverbs -

पेज हूनि जल्यारि आंबले घासु

(If the rice-gruel is hot, a bite to the salted mango:-

गुड्यारि आसात अंबे, समुद्रां आसा मीट, लोणचें करुक भर्णि हाडि

(The mangoes are on the hill, salt is in the ocean, bring the jar to preserve the pickles.) etc.

Other food stuffs included udad, kulath, tuvar dhal, etc. Most of these are used in preparing soup or curry. That the use of udad soaked in water is very frequent, is evident from the proverbs

उडीदु फुगल्यारि मद्दाळे जत्ता वे ?

(If soaked in water does the black-gram become a drum?)

एक खतखत्यान कुळीतु सिज्जना

(The horse-gram is not cooked, boiling only for a while.) etc.

There are various sauces, gruels and condiments which are taken rather more commonly as subsidiary food items.

References to turmeric, mustard, black pepper, salt etc. are also seen in the proverbs. Examples -

ससमा एहे मत्ते मळवा एहे सर्ते

(The head is as small as a mustard and the umbrella is as wide as the sky.)

रससम दीवूनु कुवाळे घेता

(To receive an ash-gourd in exchange of a mustard.)

रासमा गुडडो करता, मुंयेक हस्ति करता

(He makes the hillock of the mustard and an elephant of an ant.)

मीट खेल्लोलो उदाक पित्तोलो

(He who eats salt will drink water.)

मीट घव्यारि कोणु निबोरु, सून हव्यारि मांयि निब्बारि

(The cooked rice grain becomes hard due to the salt and the mother-in-law becomes tough when a daughter-in-law comes.)

हांव गोरि अक्का गोरि हळदि वाठितले कोण ?

(I am fair, my sister is fair, who will grind the turmeric?).

Oils were used for frying and seasoning the vegetables and other food items. Coconut oil is the favourite one. The products of the cow included milk and its conversions, curd, butter, butter-milk and ghee which were used in abundance and were generally taken with meals. These were also used in various food preparations. For example- तूप घल्लेले अयदनाक तुप्पा पशे नत्तिले रबता वे ? (Does the vessel of ghee remain without showing its oily nature?) The butter is also frequently referred to in the proverbs as can be seen in

लोणियांतूलो अगगोळु कळ्ळेल्या गदि

(As the hair which is taken out from the butter.)

लोणि सांझूनु हातु लेविल्ली संगति

(Licking the hand ignoring the butter.)

लोणि अस्स जल्यारि तूप कोरुक तोडोवु अस्स वे ?

(If there is butter, will it take much time to produce ghee out of it ?) etc.

The following proverbs indicate the use of fruits and roots taken as food by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Among these are mangoes, jack fruits, bananas, wood apples, rose apples, jujubes, myrabolans, pomegranates, dates, coconuts, udumbaras, etc.

अंब्या वेळारि फत्तोरु पळ्यारीयि अंबोचि

(In the mango-season, if a stone falls down, everybody will take it as a mango.)

अंबो पोणसांतु न्हय दुबळे मनशांतु न्हय

(Mango is not among the jack-fruits and an emaciated fellow is not among the ordinary men.)

अंब्या रुक्काक फत्तोरु मारचे चड

(Stones are generally thrown at the mango tree.)

रुंबड फुटल्यारि फुसका भायर येतात

(If a fig-fruit is broken, ants will come out of it.)

केळिं खत्तल्याक तोंड दुक्कता वे ?

(Will there be pain in the mouth while eating the plantains?)

केळिं गोड म्होणु सालि खावंची वे ?

(Does anybody eat the rind of the plantains because the plantains are sweet?)

केळि सोत्तुच्ये सरसार कि खावंचे रारसार ?

(Which one is easy, to peel plantains or to eat them?)

कारया रुक्काक बोर जता ये ?

(Does the *Nuxvomica* tree produce the jujube fruit?)

खज्जूरु पिकतना कायळ्या तोंडाक रुव

(When the dates are ripe, the mouth of the crow is infected.)

नारलेकार रडता नारलाक, तेलकार रडता तेल्लाक

(The coconut-seller cries for coconuts and the oil-seller cries for oil.)

आवाळो दीवृनु कुपाळे घेयप

(Receive an ashgourd in exchange of an amalaka.)

आवाळो विकिकल्लो दुळ्हु कोडु जायना

(The money received from selling the amalaka is not bitter.)

Food was served especially in the south on plantain leaves - The proverb खेल्लेले पत्रारि हाँगल्या गदि (As if one has excreted on the leaf on which he has taken food.) throws some light on this point. The proverbs,

उष्ट्या पत्रावळि सी लोळता आनी गांव भरि भोवंता

(He rolls like the leaf in the garbage and roams about in the whole village.)

उष्ट्या फोडावले पत्राक सूर्णी झगडतात

(Dogs quarrel for the thrown-out leaves on which food was taken.)

speak of the leaves thrown out after taking food. It was believed that taking food on a plantain leaf was good for

health. The partakers of food sat on a flat wooden board (माणाय) placed on the floor purified with cow-dung besmeared on it. References are seen in the proverbs on the use of such wooden seats. For example-

कष्टकालारि बेस्सल्लि माणायिं शत्रु

(The wooden seat turns to be an enemy during bad days.)

बायले मारका जल्यारि बेस्सल्लि माणायि नुप्पूरो वे ?

(Is not the wooden seat sufficient to kill a wife?)

कुल्ले पळवूनु माणायिं आनी तोंड पळवूनु पोळे

(The wooden seat must be according to the buttocks and the rice-dosas must be according to the mouth.) etc.

There are references to the cow-dung in many of the proverbs.

आपण शेण खावूनु दुर्सेरया तोडाक हातु पुस्सीता

(He himself eats the cow-dung and rubs the hand on another's face.)

शेणांतूले कीज्याक शेणा घाणि ना

(The worm in the cow-dung does not feel the stink.)

गिरेस्तान शेण खालें जल्यारि ओखदाक खालें, गरीबान खालें जल्यारि मात्र भुक्केक खालें.

(If the wealthy man eats the cow-dung, it is for cure and if the poor man eats it, it is for hunger.)

After taking meals and beverages, as also after smoking, mouth was rinsed with clean and pure water.

The chewing of betel leaf (तांबूल) appears to have been fairly in vogue and it was popular even among some

rahmins. There are references to the betel leaves and betel plant. पानवेली निमित्तान मशीगाक उदाक. (Watering the Moringa tree in the pretext of betel plant.) refer to the use of betel leaves by the Konkani people.

There are many articles connected with the kitchen as the utensils, firewood, dishes etc. There are references to these in the Konkani proverbs.

तोपिलातूले घेत्यारि कपलातूले व्हरत वे ?

(Anybody can steal something from the vessel but how can one steal anything from the fate?)

दायि आसतना हातु इत्याक लरसूनु घेवंका

(Why do you burn your hand when there is a ladle?)

मराळे कुळ्याक करठ्या चीप

(A spoon made of coconut shell for the earthen pot used for cooking fish.)

The articles also include firewood as can be seen from the proverbs -

रंदूक कळ्णा जल्यारि राकडां वोल्लिं

(One who does not know how to cook blames the firewood.)

रान मोवूनु राकडां मेळन्हयें

(He roamed in the whole forest but did not get the firewood.)

कपडां विकिकल्ले गावांत राकडां विकुळ्यें

(Fire-wood must not be sold in the country where the sarees have been sold.)

रक्कूड सौरग म्होणु मरचाक जाता वे ?

(Should one die because the firewood is costly?)

Mortar and Pestle are other items. The proverbs -

वानांत बेस्सूनु कांडणा मारु चुकोवंच्याक जाता वे ?

(Sitting in a mortar how can you avoid the beats of the pestle?)

कांडण कोयरांत वत्ता वे, हस्ति कोडग्यांत निष्पता वे ?

(Can the pestle hide in the rubbish, can the elephant hide in a cow-pen?)

refer to these items. The proverbs -

रगोडो तिंबल्यारि भिज्जता वे ?

(Does the grinder if drenched, become soaked?)

रगोडो भंगार जल्यारि गांव भरि वट्टुयात

(If the wet grinder is of gold, the whole village can grind.)

रगड्याक आनी घाण्याक लडायि जत्तसना तेप्पळ न्हयिं वे चेंचता?

(When there is a quarrel between the wet grinder and the mill, it is the substance that is ground that suffers.)

रगड्या लगि निमग्नु जायि वे मस्सोलु वाटचाक ?

(Does anybody grind after getting the consent of the grinder ?)

refer to the wet grinder. The utensils of a household are referred to in the following proverbs -

वट्टें मोडवूनु तट्टें केल्ले, तट्टें मोडवूनु चिष्ट केल्ले, तें  
कायब्यान क्लेल्ले

(A big plate was melted into a small plate, the small plate was melted into a spoon and the spoon was taken away by the crows.)

शिक्या पोऱु तुटोलो मजराक पुण्य पिक्कले

(The string of the hanging pot was broken and the fortune of the cat was ripened.)

कळबेलेले वट्यांत तवका सीत

(To serve rice mixed with buttermilk in a plate full of verdigris.)

कयलीवेले पोळ्याक कयलातोचि जाय

(For making the flat rice-dosas on an iron plate, only a flat laddle must be used.)

तोपलांतूले व्हल्यारि कपलांतूले व्हरत वे ?

(Anybody can steal something from the vessel, but how can one steal anything from the fate?)

Further the proverbs -

चरवेक अवसल्लि मांडि

(A lid suitable for the vessel.)

दायि मुक्कारि सीत मारशी

(Laddle comes first, then the cooked rice.)

दायि आसतना हातु इत्याक लस्सूनु घेवंका

(When there is a laddle, why are you burning your hand?)

चेल्लि बुद्धति दायि अस्सिल्ले कडे दावलो सोदीता दावलो

अस्सिल्ले कडे दायि सोदीता.

(The girl is intelligent, she searches for the spoon in the place of laddle and the laddle in the place of the spoon.)

give an account of the lids and laddles used for cooking and serving purposes.

A delicious dish, the rice-milk pudding used by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins is often referred to in the Konkani proverbs. For example -

खीरी गोडसाणि दवलाक इति गोतु ?

(How can the laddle know the sweetness of the rice-milk-pudding ?)

खीरींतुं होण बुड्डोवंचे

(To dip an old coin in the rice-milk-pudding.)

गुड्डो चडतना खीरि भुर्किल्लो उड्गासु जल्लो

(While climbing the hill, we remembered the rice-milk-pudding we had relished.)

कुरडे मुस्साक खीरीय अळसीकयि एककीचि

(For a blind fly the rice-milk-pudding and the excrement are alike.)

विक्करलेलि खीरि क्षत्रपाला बोडारि

(The overflowed rice-milk pudding is on the head of the Kshatrapal.)

There are a number of delicious dishes made of jaggery and rice flour. Following proverb may be quoted in this connection -

अप्पे खांवका कि खण्णां मेज्जुका ?

(Do you want to eat the rice cakes or count the holes of the iron plate?)

## Trade and Wealth

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins attached great importance to wealth and prosperity which was looked upon as one of the three aims of human existence, others being

harma and Kama. There are a number of proverbs connected with the details regarding wealth from which all undertakings emanate. न हि तद्विद्वाते किञ्चिद्वदर्थेन न सिद्ध्यति says *Panchatantra*. The proverbs -

धनाक पाकां आसात

(Wealth has got feathers.)

धनियालै नांव गण्य

(The name of the rich man is always considered.)

दुड्डु असत्यारि गुड्डो हल्लोवयात

(If you have wealth you will be able to move a hill)

दामु अस्सित्याक मानु

(Where there is wealth there is respect.)

दामु अस्सित्याक सोयरि घड

(A wealthy man has many visitors.)

दामु अस्सिल्ले कड दामु लोळता

(Wealth flows to where there is wealth.)

दुड्डु म्हळ्यारि प्रेत सरि तोड आं करता

(Utter 'money' and you can see even the corpse gaping.) etc.

support this view. Hence there could be no sin greater than negligence in money matters. The proverb हातांत ना कास नाका खंचे कैलास (How can one who has no wealth dream of reaching Kailas?) reflects this point. The importance of wealth is very well brought out in the proverb गिरेत्तान शेण ब्रालै जल्यार ओखदाक खालै गरीबान खालै जल्यारि मात्र भुकेक खालै (If the wealthy man eats the cow-dung, it is for cure and if the poor man eats it, it is for hunger). Wealthy men always get regard from the common people. Hence some people

in the society always pretend to be rich. A reference to such people can be seen in the proverbs

गिरेस्तालो वाडो न्हेस्सूक ना फाडो

(He is wealthy, but there are no clothes to wear.)

घरां ना खावंचा वाट भायर वत्तना मिशियेक तूप

(Though there is no means even for gruel at home, the moustache has a grand shape outside)

नांव पळेयल्यारि कुबेरु घरां पळेयल्यारि मडिक उंति

(His name is Kubera, but the vessels in the house are empty.) etc.

The proverbs also point out the disadvantages of wealth as can be seen from

दुडवा वयरि वीष ना

(There is no other poison more effective than wealth.)

दुड्डु आसल्यारि भय

(Where there is wealth there is fear.)

दुड्वा दुड्वा खंयि वत्ता चांग असल्याक वायट करूक वत्ता

(O, money, where are you going? I am going to spoil those who are good.) etc.

The acquisition and conservation of wealth is very difficult. The proverb दुड्डु दव्वरि बंधूनु तो वत्ता सुंदूनु (Even if you keep the money tied, it will go out loosening the grip.) indicates the unsteady nature of wealth. आदायु पोळोनु खर्च करि (Expend the money according to the income.) indicates expenditure and conservation of money. Wealth, no doubt, leads to prosperity, but it is sure that it takes man away from God.

दुड्डु सगळे वट्टेन व्हरता रवगा वाट मात्र चुक्केयता

(Wealth takes man everywhere, but misleads him in his way to heaven.)

दुड्गा वयरि यीष ना रंडे वयरि सोये ना

(There is no poison worse than wealth and no abuse worse than 'रांड').

The acquisition of wealth by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins has been mainly through trade. There are references in the Konkani proverbs relating to the trade. A flourishing condition of trade can be seen reflected in these proverbs. The affluent atmosphere prevailing in the life of luxury speaks volumes about the prosperous conditions in which the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins lived. There were merchants among them who are engaged in inter-state business and those who dealt in rich costumes and jewellery. The trade was mainly based on the metals, mainly iron. The proverbs -

उंदराक लोकडा ब्यारु कित्याक ?

(What is the use of iron business for a mouse?)

कीट कळलें लोकड

(Purified iron.)

लोककड उज्जा रिवाय मोयु जायना

(Iron does not become soft unless it is put in the fire.)  
etc.

prove that the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins were engaged in the trade of iron. There were land-lords among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins who were looked at with great regard by the common people. The proverb - धनियान चाकराक सांगले,

चाकरान सूण्याक सांगलें, सूण्यान बालाक सांगलें (The rich man ordered the servant, the servant ordered the dog and the dog ordered the tail.) points out sarcastically the prominence of these wealthy people in the society along with their servants and attendants. There were small traders also who led rather hard and strenuous but contented life. They always practised trade depending on the money lenders. The proverb - उर्सीणा ब्यारु उष्णाक कारण (Credit business causes misery.) points out the disadvantages and difficulties arising through such dependence. The proverbs-

रीण केल्यारि घाण्यांत हातु दिल्या वरि

(Making debts is like putting the hand in a mill.)

रीण हाडतलें गोड पावंयतलें जीवा पाड

(Debts always bring sweetness, but to pay them off is very difficult.)

धन ना जल्यारीयि रीण नक्का

(Even if you have no wealth, do not have debts.)

give an account of the difficulties caused by the debts in business.

There were many Gowda Saraswat Brahmin merchants moving from one part of the country to another and engaged in brisk internal trade and extended their scope to outer markets. These flourishing merchants dealt in gold, silver, cotton, cloth, victuals, paddy, pepper, dried fruits, oil, spices, perfumes etc. The volume of trade carried on and the wealth acquired through this business was very large. Sea trade was also in practice. Though according to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin tradition sea voyage was against the social order and it was supposed to contaminate the

society, still the sea trade was flourishing. Their sojourn in far east countries such as Siam, Combodia, Java, Sumatra etc. led the establishment of commercial centres there. The proverb लंकेतु भंगराक भोल ना (Gold has no value in Lanka) shows that the trade was extended southwards also. The proverb विदूरु मलकाक गेल्यावरि (As the mouse went to Malakka.) refers to the international trade from Malakka. Further the frequent references of ships in the Konkani proverbs are an evidence to the fact that the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin traders were eminent voyagers. The proverbs-

तुगोले तारवारि मेंगोले अर्ध फप्पल

(Half of my arecanut is on your ship.)

भट्टाक कित्याक तारु गावत्याक इत्याक गोरु ?

(What is the need of a ship to the priest and what will the tailor do with the cattle?)

तारु भोरुक गेल्लोलो आयलो पोट भोरुक गेल्लोलो येवूंक ना

(He who went to fill the ship, returned, he who went for filling his stomach has not returned.)

can be quoted as examples. The proverbs सामुद्रांत रोळ्ळेले तारु तडि लागतचि खरे (The ship on a sail can be trusted only when it reaches the shore.) and वारे आगिल्ले तश्श शीड दिवंये (To put the sail according to the wind.) are no doubt connected with the sailing of the ships used for trading purposes. कोबो गेल्लो तारवारि कोवि जल्ल गुरुवारि (Cock went on the ship and the hen became pregnant.) is always referred to for showing the infidelity of the wife of a sea trader. The reference here is to trade and tradesmen who sail by the ship.

As there are rich people in the society there are poor people also who suffer a lot for want of money. The Konkani proverbs deal with the condition of the poor people in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society. There are a number of proverbs comparing both the classes of the society.

दरिद्रु तुंबो खत्ता पोट्टाक, रायु तुंबो खत्ता ओखदाक

(The poor man eats Leuca Indica for his hunger and the king eats it for cure.)

होड्डानि खेल्यारि रुचियेक गरीबानि खेल्यारि भुक्केक

(When the wealthy eats, it is for taste, and when the poor eats it is for hunger.)

होड्डालैं घर लसुन्हयें, गरीबालि बायल मरुन्हयें

(The house of the wealthy must not be burnt and the wife of the poor must not die.)

In spite of such differences both the classes of people are supposed to live in harmony as given in the proverb - गरीबांक होड्डांलो सहायु जाय, होड्डांक गरीबालो सहायु जाय (The poor are in need of the help from the rich and the rich are in need of the help from the poor). The poor people always live on charity, that too is a dreadful prospect. A life in poverty is really a second gateway to death. A poor man has to live in great agony, says *Panchatantra*. तथार्थेन विहीनोऽत्र पुरुषो नामधारकः and नाममात्रा न सिद्ध्यै हि धनहीनास्तथा नराः (2/90,92). Here a poor man is compared to a burnt tree attacked by the worms.

शुष्कस्य कीटखातस्य वहिनदग्धस्य सर्वतः

तरोरप्यूषरस्थस्य वरं जन्म न चार्थिनः (2/95)

Poverty is a state of sinfulness. A poor man is always looked upon with contempt and suspicion which is already clear

in the above proverbs. He is always approached by others in a sarcastic manner which is evident from the Konkani proverbs - दरिद्र्याक हरती फाटीरि बेसवी आशा (The poor man desires to sit upon an elephant). The proverb दरिद्र गेल्लेले कडे नंचण्या खीरि (Wherever the poor goes, there is the Ragi gruel.) condemns poverty which mars the good qualities of a man in all respects. गरीबांच्या पोरांक पौबुर्पेचे फेस्त कोण सांगलां? (How can a child of a poor man partake in the feast of Pomburpem?) very clearly brings out the ill-fate of a child born in a poor family. The inability of the poor man to purchase new clothes or other necessary provisions is well marked. He is always seen contented with the torn clothes and old things as is evident from the proverb - गरीबालि पिंजल्लि गोजडी तीघि ताका शाल जोडि (The torn quilt of the poor man itself is the shawl for him). A poor man always suffers for want of money. The proverb लोभ्यांली थेली आसून रिति गरीबालि नास्तना रिते (The purse of the greedy is empty though it is full of money, the purse of the poor is empty because there is no money in it.) indicates this aspect. The proverb हत्तात ना कास तक्का खंचे केलास (How can one who has no wealth reach Kailasa?) denotes that a poor man cannot earn any kind of merit since he has no money. Nobody cares for him as the proverb says - लोडां गांडि सगळेय धुतात गरीबां तोंड पळेयता कोण? (Everybody washes the anus of the wealthy, nobody even looks at the face of the poor). Yet it is a fact that these poor men are always good at heart and faithful to their word. They always help and regard other people according to their capacity. The proverb ल्होडांगेली उतरां गोड गरीबांगेले जेवण गोड (The words of the wealthy are sweet and the meals given by the poor are very sweet.) throws some light on this good quality of the poor man.

compared to the rich man who always sticks to the words and not deeds.

Thus a real picture of the society with a state of spiritual revelation as well as material culture has been drawn in the Konkani proverbs. The style of clothing and other customs and manners of life are counted with great importance in these proverbs. A faithful picture of wickedness, incongruities in the habits, customs and manners which present the dark aspect of society can also be seen dealt with in these proverbs. The advantages and disadvantages of wealth with all the aspects are drawn out here.

## Chapter - IV

### Role of Dharma

Dharma is the complete rule of life, the harmony of the whole man who finds a right and just law of his living. It comprehends the entire range of the traditional culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. It is a multi-valued concept which can be approached in a number of ways, each valid in its own context. Dharma is attainable only through the concentration of mind. Propped up by the knowledge of reality, it is not affected by wealth and pleasure whatsoever pursued. It takes man to the highest bliss. When the mind is purified by Dharma the dust of passion does not defile it. Dharma is not in essence a defined religion. It is an openness to spiritual experience which can be called "the eternally renewed truth". Man should strive for life only by pursuing Dharma. This Dharma has been defined in the Veda as the element of stability in the world.

The religion of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins encourages freedom, spontaneity and individuality in approach to the Divine and believes that religion is private and personal and not public and social matter. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin children are allowed to choose their spiritual path from the great diversity. Their religion in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture provides a rich and open field for the soul to grow with much use on all levels. They have a wide cultural field. This is a culture of Dharma which

is useful in all spheres of life and about which the *Mahabharata* has said - धारणाद् धर्ममित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः. According to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture, religion can be explained as a revelation. It is an experience and demands the ultimate unification of life. According to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins, Dharma is the essence of religion. Whatever upholds the life or the values of life is religion. The essence of the ideal Purushartha is the harmonizing of the four groups of values - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, each in its place and proportion and nothing in excess. This idea of balance has found expression in a variety of ways. Only by balancing this world and the other world both are to be cherished. This can be easily done by following Dharma.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society treats Dharma as an important constituent of life. The field of Dharma is very wide. It constitutes the principles relating to the Supreme God as well as the common people in the society. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe in this form of Dharma. In their life, God, the Supreme Being, the creator and protector of this universe, has got an important place. They believe in the Vedic as well as Puranic Gods.

### **Concept of God**

Gods are very important in the religious life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. They are offered ceremonial worship in the temples where their idols are installed and consecrated. Their forms and statuses are as those of the Puranas. Concept of the Trinity— Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara— can be seen among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. An attempt to harmonise the relation between

The different sects of orthodox order can be seen among the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The gods Vishnu and Siva are worshipped since they are connected with the sustenance and destruction of the Universe. Other gods like Hanuman, Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Ganapati, Dattatreya, Damodara etc. are also seen worshipped. The Proverbs refer to this worship. For example-

कंसाक काळु गोकुलांतु बाळु

(The child of Gokul is the destroyer of Kamsa.)

गोडडा गणपतीक गोडडा निवेदु

(Offering of jaggery to Beloved Ganesha.)

गणपती गांडि चिमट्टु गणपतीक निवेदु

(Offerings to Ganesha by squeezing him.)

गाणपतीगेलि व्हर्डीक

(The marriage of Ganesha.)

The proverb- गणपती हातावूले लिंग (The Linga in the hands of Ganapati.) refers to the linga worship. घाटायेलो हनुमत सो आमोभे पुरते (Shines like the Hanuman of Ghats.) refers to the worship of Hanuman.

Though such chosen deities were frequently worshipped by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins they always believed in the Supreme entity, the only one without option, and all other gods being merely secondary expressions of its divinity. The Supreme being is frequently referred to in the Konkani proverbs. Though the Supreme entity is described as having immemorable forms and names, yet it is believed that He is accessible to devotion. The proverb-

लेकल्यारि देवु ना जल्यारि फत्तोरु

(If you believe, it is God, if you don't, it is only a stone.)

फत्तोरु पुजिल्लो देवु जल्लो

(He worshipped the stone and it became God.)

refers to the formless Supreme entity. These proverbs refer to the saligram worship also. "In what-so-ever manner men approach me, even so do I welcome them" (*Gita* IV.II) is the main concept behind this. There are a number of proverbs in which strong support for this view can be seen.

मन तशी भावु, भावु तशी देवु

(As the mind, so the feeling, as the feeling, so the God.)

भावु आशिल्या तशी देवु

(God's magnitude is according to the feeling.)

This is the Magna Carta of the spiritual freedom of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Those who realise the actual relationship between Sat and Bhava are the true seers. Bhava is important in devotion. All expressions here are considered to be a means for the purification and integration of feeling. This is the goal of culture and stepping stone of self-realisation. According to the Konkani proverbs, the Supreme God is a great donor. He protects those who are helpless. अरक्षितं तिष्ठति दैवरक्षितम् says *Panchatantra*. The same idea is expressed in the proverb दिक्कनत्तिल्याक देवु सहायु (God helps the blind). The Proverbs-

अंधाळ मगता एकु दोळे देवु दित्ता दोनि

(The blind begs for one eye and God gives him two.)

मन जांचे भोळे देवु दित्ता केळे

(To those who are simple God gives plantain.)

खत्ता पित्ता देवु दित्ता

(He eats, he drinks and God gives him again and again.)  
etc.

express the mercy of the Great God. He always protects those who are pure-minded— जांचे मन भोळे तांकां देवु दित्ता केळे (To those who are simple God gives plantain.) and punishes those whose minds are not pure. जांचे मन फाड तांकां देवु दित्ता थापट (To those who are cruel God gives a blow). The proverb पिड रच्चिल्लो देवु उंडि रच्चिना वे ? (Does not the God create food for those whom he has created?) also refers to the same idea. Further those who are not just, no doubt they are punished as indicated in the proverb न्यायु सोणु अन्यायु करतल्याक देवु हातु दीना (Those who do injustice, God does not help them). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins pledge offerings to different deities for the fulfilment of their wishes, but these are done only with a pure mind and dutifulness. The proverb गांव भरे दवांक पांय पळ्यारीयि घोवु नतिल्लै चेहुं जत्ता वे ? (Though all the Gods in the village are worshipped, will a child be born in the absence of the husband?) can be quoted as example.

### Universal Forms of Worship

According to the ancient seers and yogis, Nature herself is the manifest form of the deity. All things in nature in their true reality are objects of worship, forms of the sacred God. Each thing is in its true nature a name and form of the Divine. Originally in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture the deities represented the great cosmic powers of nature, the sun, wind, fire and water. They also exist inside us as the forces of our body and mind, our breath and perception. Life itself is a form of worship. When we link

up to the fact of worship which is life itself that we are truly in a state of prayer and that we are really alive at all. Hence the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always believed in worship, especially temple worship which is the sole representation of our soul and body. The divine presence should not be excluded from our communities. Temples are important as they provide a sacred space for the community to gather wherein the spiritual energies can be renewed. They become a focus for our collective aspiration and the doorways into the subtle realms of religion and spirituality. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always believed in temples. There are a number of references to such temples in the Konkani proverbs. For example- देवळा कलशारि कायळो बेसल्यारि देवाकय व्होडु जत्ता वे ? (Does the crow, if seated on the temple-top become greater than God?). This proverb really reveals the quality of aspiration projected through the temples. That the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins offer to the Divine what is most valuable to them is well brought out in this proverb. The other proverbs are-

पुज्जेक गेल्लेल्या मत्यारि देवळ पळ्ळें

(The temple fell on his head who went for worship.)

उघडे देवळां वच्चे कमि धांकिल्या तुरंगांत वच्चे चड

(Those who enter the open temple are very few and those who go to the closed tunnel are many.)

देवळ कितले लगि देवु तितलो दूर

(As much nearer the temple, so much farther from the God.)

Temples were the places where ceremonial worship was offered. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believed worship

is the natural centre of human life. Hence in each house there is a central room, the place for meditation and prayer. Pooja was the form of worship emerged from the concept of devotion, fervid surrender to the chosen God. There are lots of references to Pooja in the Konkani proverbs.

घरचे देवाक पुज्जा ना भारचे देवाक निवेदु

(The God of the house is not worshipped, the God outside the house is given offerings.)

पुज्जेक गेल्लेल्या मत्यारि देवळ पळ्ळे

(The temple fell on his head who went for worship.)

can be quoted as examples. The several modes of worship which generally followed the morning prayer to the Sun and homage to fire consisted in kneeling before the idol of the God, invocation, propitiation by offering water to Him, washing the feet, offering flowers and incense, waving light in front of Him and making Him offerings of food and ablation and circumambulation. The proverbs

हत्ता पावनतिल्ले फूल देवाक

(The flower that the hand cannot reach is for the God.)

आरति घेतल्यारि उण्ण तीर्थ घेतल्यारि शेत्य

(If you worship the holy lights, you will be affected by heat and if you take holy water you will be affected by cold.)

वोत्तु गेल्लेले दूध कृष्णाक अर्पण

(The milk that overflows is treated as the offering to God, Krishna.)

indicate the forms of worship of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. These proverbs present the different modes of

Pooja with chants, flowers, lamps, incense, naivedya, and tirtha offered to the Divine. Pooja itself means the offering of flowers which is referred to in the above proverbs. The flower symbolises the natural opening of the heart to the Divine, the way in which a flower naturally unfolds its petals. Actually the system of Pooja purifies the environment, senses and emotions of the persons and directs the mind in the path of meditation. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins were aware of this fact and this culture is reflected here and there in the proverbs.

### Beliefs and Superstitions

Moksha is conceived as the attainment of the highest bliss in the presence of God following the eternal emancipation of the individual soul from the cycle of transmigration. The proverb तण्टाणे मेल्यारि तकतका मोक्षु (One's salvation is the result of his own toil.) refers to this concept of Moksha. The concept of Svarga to which the virtuous souls are transferred is also evident from the Konkani proverbs—

सुत्ताक धोर्नु स्वर्गारि चोळ्ळो

(He entered heaven with the help of a thread.)

टिक्या चणे खावंचे आनी स्वर्गलोकु दिकचें

(To eat the beads of glass and to enter heaven.)

नरकाक णव्व वट्टो स्वर्गाक एकि

(There are nine paths to hell and only one to heaven.)

भीमु अस्सिल्लो स्वर्गु नक्का रंगणिनें अस्सिल्लो वाठर नक्का

(I don't want heaven where there is Bhima and do not want the place where there are tinkling toys.)

Notwithstanding the importance given to the aims of Svarga and Apavarga, the social life in general nourished a wordly outlook which can also be seen in the above proverbs. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins who followed the Brahmanical order of life generally believed that one cannot attain the other world without leading the present life. The proverb पूर्वित्ते जन्माचे रीण हे जन्मातु दिवाचे (The debts of previous births are repaid in this birth.) reveals this view of life.

### Concept of Rebirth

Rebirth is a well-known but seldom really understood term from the Vedas. Our inner self never takes birth, nor it dies as its nature is eternal. The reincarnating entity is the casual body wherein our Karmic impressions are stored. Every individual has a spark of divinity in him. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strongly believe in this principle. They accept the life as an experience to provide man with self-knowledge which is gained through the transmigration of the soul through the cycle of birth and death.

The idea of accomplishment of the next world, belief in transmigration of soul, belief in the unforeseen results of action—all these prompted the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins to believe in the bhagya or providence which inevitably bound and regulated one's present life. The belief in fate and an implied fear from its vagaries are frequently reflected in the Konkani proverbs.

पोरलातु हगूनु पूर्वजिताक रोडचे

(To excrete in the hearth and to say that it is the result of the action of the previous birth.)

कपलातु नतिल्याक कोळूनु घल्यारि वोळूनु वत्ता

(If fate does not allow, all the gifts, human counsels fail.)

कर्मातु बरेयलेले जन्मातु सुंटना

(Destiny can never be prevented.) etc.

The belief does not render the people idle and inactive because they always think that there is nothing impossible to achieve in the world for one who is endowed with extraordinary spirit, valour and talents. The theory of transmigration of soul also gave rise to the popular belief that the tendencies of the previous birth stand predominant in the present life as in the proverb कर्मातु बरेयलेले जन्मातु सुंटना (Destiny can never be prevented.). They also believed in an elaborate concept of sins—the five great sins - killing of a Brahmana, drinking intoxicating liquors, theft, committing adultery with the wife of a religious teacher and associating with any one committing these sins, and numerous lesser sins. The proverb पंचमहापातकि घराक दशमहापातकि कवड (A gate made of ten great sins for a house made of five great sins.) can be quoted as an evidence. Various rites, vows and fasts were prescribed for securing exemption from the effects of the above sins. As these people believed in Svarga so also they believed in Naraka.

Here comes the concept of the Tirthas. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe strongly in the Tirthas. The proverb भोवंचाक गेल्लो तीर्थातु मन उरले घरातु (He went for a visit to the Tirthas, but his mind was in the house.) refers to pilgrimage. Importance of a visit to holy places had been stressed as a means of obtaining religious merit and dissociation from sins. Prominent places of pilgrimage casually mentioned are Prayaga, Kasi, Rameswaram etc.

रामेश्वराक गेल्यारीयि शनैश्चर रोणा

(One is not freed from the effects of the Saturn even if he visits Rameswar.)

काशीतु गेल्यारीयि रामेश्वराक गेल्यारीयि पाप सुटना

(The sins are not washed out if you visit Kasi or Rameswar.)

are the proverbs that can be cited as examples. Death in a holy place was believed to result in a religious merit powerful enough to influence even the course of the next life.

The belief in planets, the various astrological combinations and the stars and their effects, good or evil, on the destiny of the living beings on the basis of the planets etc. are many a time referred to in these proverbs. The proverbs-

माकाय धनिष्ठा रायाकय धनिष्ठा

(My birth-star is Dhanishta and the birth-star of the king also is Dhanishta.)

ग्रह फिरल्यारि मत्ते फिरता

(When the planets are in bad positions one becomes mad.) etc.

can be quoted as examples to the fact that these people strongly believed in the effects of the planets on man. The proverb रामेश्वराक गेल्यारीयि शनैश्चर रोणा (One is not freed from the effects of Saturn even if he visits Rameswar.) indicates the bad effects of the planet Saturn on man.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believed in numerous mystical yantras drawn by those skilled in mystical formulae to exercise the evil spirits. There was also deep belief in

the mantras, the mystical formulae etc. The proverb मंत्राकय तंत्र चड (There are more Tantras than Mantras.) is an evidence to this fact. These people also believe in ghosts. The Brahmarakshasas, originally conceived as ghosts of the Brahmanas who led an unholy life, are demons with extra ordinary strength haunting a lonely island or a remote forest region. The proverb भित्तल्या मर्खी ब्रह्मराक्षसु (He who has fear, Brahmarakshasa follows him constantly.) refers to this belief of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The proverb आज्या देवीक घोरु नाशिल्लो वेताळाक बायल नाशिल्ली (The goddess Ajya had no husband and Vetal had no wife.) refers to the Vetalas who were the vampires who had their abode in corpses and when raised up from sleep, harmed the people. The Yakshas and Gandharvas, associated with Kubera as his attendants are often represented as occupying bodies of the womenfolk and residing or killing their suitors. The belief in the possession by these spirits of human bodies naturally gave rise to the corresponding belief in exorcism. The proverbs-

भुत्ता नंबूतु काळकां वच्चें

(To follow the Ghost and enter into darkness.)

भूत आनी भीति एक गावंची

(The Ghost and fear are from the same country.)

can be quoted as examples.

The employment of spells particularly for malevolent purposes, was known as Abhichara. It was believed that a person can be bound with the help of spells and thus making him inactive. The proverb अपणाक नक्का तीनि कास उव्वाळूक जाय स (One does not expend three paise for his livelihood and he expends six paise for Abhichara.) refers

to this action. अंत्रपिशाच री भोवतल्याक रबूक ना ठिकाणे (He who roams about like the ghost has no habitat.)— throws some light on the popular belief that ghosts wander here and there since there is no abode for them. कट्टे नसिल्ले गुत्तान भोवत्ताचे आसाचे (The evil spirit which has no place for rest, always roams about here and there.) also refers to the same belief. Hence people give them offerings in a particular place fixed for this which is called कट्टे. More developed and widespread however was the concept of ill omens, a number of which have been recorded in the proverbs. A bad dream, throbbing of right eye of women etc. find a mention in these. The presence of a widow on auspicious occasions was considered ominous and it was carefully avoided.

### Socio-Religious Festivals

An important feature of the social life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins was the organisation of socio-religious gatherings on different occasions which vivified the cultural atmosphere of the society and graced it with elegance, colour and beauty. Most of the festivals were inspired by religious feelings and were celebrated as part of the propitiation of various gods. In the Konkani proverbs there are references to such festivals in abundance. For example

असल्यारि अष्टमि ना जल्यारि एकादशी

(If there is money, the festival of Janmashtami is celebrated, if there is no money, fast is observed.)

शिवरात्रीगेरि गोकळाष्टमि आयली

(Janmashtami and Sivaratri fell on the same day.)

परबेरि पोळि शिगम्यारि होळि

(On the festival day, the sweetmeats are prepared and on the Shigmo festival Holi is celebrated.)

परब चुकल्यारीयि पोळि चुकल्या वे ?

(Though the festival is delayed, can the sweetmeat be given up?) etc.

Good occasions for festivity were also provided by the happy events as the new year day and other important days. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins called these festivals, परब a word derived from Sanskrit पर्व meaning festival, an occasion of joy. It is mainly based on the periodic changes of the moon. These days were celebrated in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Society. Delicious dishes were prepared in connection with these days. The Konkani proverb परबेरि पोळि घराक माळि (Sweetmeats for the festival and stairs for the house.) denotes this with the help of a simile. The proverbs परब चुकल्यारीयि पोळि चुकल्या वे ? (Though the festival is delayed, can the sweetmeat be given up?) and अशें म्हणचे न्हय तशें म्हणचे न्हय दीवाळचे दीवे रे पुत्ता (O, my son, don't say this or that, these are only the lamps of Diwali.) show the importance of delicious dishes during these occasions. These kinds of festivals were celebrated in connection with a particular period of the year.

### Deepavali

Deepavali or Diwali means "a row of lights". It falls on the last two days of the dark half of the Karthik (October-November). It is celebrated in memory of the triumph of Krishna over the demon Narakasura by killing him. This festival is also known as Naraka Chaturdasi among the

Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. On the Deepavali day people take oil bath in the morning, wear new clothes and go to the temple for worship. Sweetmeats are distributed among the members of the community in the happiness on the death of Narakasura. Fire works are lighted which are regarded as the effigies of Narakasura who was killed on this day. It is believed that an oil bath early in the morning of a Deepavali day is as purifying as a bath in the Ganges. There is an air of freedom, festivity and friendliness everywhere. This festival can be regarded as a festival of unity. The proverb आयली दीवाळि परखो निवळि (Diwali has been celebrated and the festivals have come to a stand still.) refers to this festival as a festival coming at the end of the festival season.

Waking up early in the morning and taking an oil bath is a great blessing from the standpoint of health, ethical discipline, efficiency in work and spiritual advancement. In a mood of great rejoicing, people move about freely mixing with each other without any reserve, all enmity being forgotten, perhaps for a little while. This implication is also seen in a proverb relating to Deepavali, since proverbs always speak of truth - अरो म्हणवे न्हय तरो म्हणवे न्हय दीवाळेदीवे रे पुता (O, my son, don't say this or that, these are only the lamps of Diwali.) which refers to the fact that the joy is only for a short while.

Deepavali is really a festival of inner illumination. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe that the Supreme light of lights enlightens the understanding by celebrating this festival.

## Sivaratri

Sivaratri falls on the 13th or the 14th day of the dark half of Phalgun (February - March). It refers to the night of Siva because ceremonies in honour of Siva take place chiefly at night. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins celebrate this festival with great faith. Originally these people were Smartha and have a special regard to Siva. On this day they observe a strict fast. Some of them do not even take a drop of water. They keep vigil all night. Siva is worshipped throughout the night by continued abhishekas of the Sivalinga with milk, curd, honey, etc. The chanting of the mantra, 'Om Namah Sivaya' continues day and night. Bel leaves are treated as sacred at this festival, the offerings of which are made to the Lingam. The Sivamahimna Stotra is sung with great fervour and devotion and the Panchakshara Mantra is recited repeatedly. It is believed that he who utters the name of Siva during this day with perfect devotion and concentration is freed from all sins. He is liberated from the wheel of birth and death. The Konkani proverbs -

उज्जल्ले कडे एकादशि दिल्लेले कडे शिवरात्रि

(Where she was born, there is Ekadasi (poverty), where she was married there is Sivaratri (more poverty).)

शिवरात्रीगेरि गोकलाष्टमि आयली

(Janmashtami and Sivaratri fell on the same day.)

एकादशीगेरि शिवरात्रि आयली

(The Sivaratri fell on the Ekadasi day.) etc.

refers to this festival especially to the fast observed during the festival.

Before breaking the fast in connection with Sivaratri, Brahmins are fed and the fast ends after performing the prescribed ceremonies.

## Holi

Holi commences about ten days before the full moon of the month, Phalgun (February - March) but is usually observed only for the last three or four days, terminating with the full moon. The Konkani saying आजि होळि फायि पोळि परां उक्कूळि (Today is Holi, tomorrow, sweetmeat, and the day after tomorrow, the third day of Holi festival.) refers to this. This festival is observed in connection with Lord Krishna destroying the demoness Holika who devoured the children in days of yore. It is also believed that Holika can be subdued only by abuse and foul language. Hence the use of abuse and foul language is a peculiarity of this festival. In Konkani this festival is also named as शिगमो. In Goa the month of Phalgun is popularly known as Shigmo month. References can be seen in the following Konkani proverbs-

परवेरि पोळि शिग्म्यारि होळिं

(On the festival day, the sweetmeats are made and in the Shigmo festival, the Holi is celebrated.)

माघ वंचूं तर शिगमो नांचूं

(If we live up to Magha month, we can partake in the Shigmo festival.)

This festival is for reminding the people that those who love God shall be saved and those who torture the devotees of God shall be reduced to ashes. The effigy of Holika is burnt during this festival to remind the Puranic story of Holika and Prahlada. People compose and sing special songs. शिगमो

सरलो कविता उरली (The celebrations of Shigmo are completed, but the poems exist.) refers to these compositions. शिगम्यांत वांचून होळियेत नांचयेत (If we live upto Shigmo festival, we can dance at the Holi festival.) refers to the colourful dances of this festival. On the whole, the festival is very colourful. The proverbs-

वेळार वेळ शिगम्याक खेळ

(There are different kinds of shows in the Shigmo festival.)

फुडेच खुशाल तांतूय शिगमो

(Already there was delight and there comes the Shigmo festival.)

refer to this phase of the festival. During this festival, people clean their houses, remove all dirty articles and burn them. Boys dance about in the streets and play practical jokes on passers-by. The proverb लग्नांत बायलो म्हस्त आनी शिगम्यांत दावले म्हस्त (There are more women in a marriage and more men in the Shigmo festival.) refers to the majority of male members in the festival. Though the festival is full of joy and spirit, the spiritual significance of the festival is still remembered by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. It is believed that by burning the effigy the sensual pleasures are destroyed and this leads man gradually to the spiritual path and divine communion.

The social element in the festival of Holi is the uniting or embracing of everybody. There is no difference between great and small, rich and poor in this festival. Love, sympathy, co-operation and equality – is the message of this festival.

## Janmashtami

Janmashtami falls on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada (August - September). This is one of the greatest festivals of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. The proverb असल्यारि अष्टमि ना जल्यारि एकादशि (If there is money the Janmashtami is celebrated, if there is no money fast is observed.) is itself an evidence to the fact that this festival is celebrated with great regard and fervour by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Lord Krishna was born at midnight. A twenty four hour fast is observed on this day which is broken at midnight. Decorations are made on this occasion in the houses and temples of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Kirtanas in praise of Krishna are sung during the occasion. Towards midnight there is a grand Pooja of Lord Krishna. The image of the Lord is bathed in milk while his name is chanted repeatedly. This worship concludes with offering of flowers, waving of lights (Aarti) and reading of the portion of *Bhagavatam* in connection with the birth of Krishna. This synchronised with midnight, the hour of the Lord's birth. Holy Prasadam is distributed among the assembled devotees.

## Naga Panchami

The fifth day of the Sukla Paksha (bright half) of the Sravana month is considered to be sacred to Nagas or snakes. According to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins the snakes are powerful gods, some well-disposed to humans, others malevolent. The fifth day of the bright half of Sravana is dedicated to them and the serpents are worshipped in various ways. The house-holder feeds live snakes which have a shrine in the compound. They are offered milk, fruits

etc. as a part of the worship. The Konkani proverb गरुडाले गावांतु नागरपंचमि (Nagapanchami is celebrated in the land of Garuda.) refers to this festival celebrated as a worship to the snake gods.

### Ganesh Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi falls on the fourth day of the month of Bhadrapad. Ganesh was born on this day. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are particularly attached to this God. The clay image of Ganesh is worshipped and it is drowned in a lake or river. The Konkani proverb गणपति कोरुक वोच्चूनु मंकड केल्ले (He planned to make the idol of Ganesha and it turned out to be a monkey.) refers to this clay image. Ganesh Chaturthi always falls in the hot season. Hence the proverb -शिगम्यांत पाब्सु चौथींतु गीमु (There is rain during Shigmo and heat during Vinayaka Chaturthi). The proverb चवतीक रग्गोडो दीस रात गडगडेता (The grinder works day and night during Vinayaka Chaturthi.) indicates the preparation of the various dishes made during this festival.

### Mahalaya

The dark fortnight of Aswayuja (September - October) is known as the Mahalaya Paksha, the fortnight specially sacred for offering oblations to the departed ancestors. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins observe this dark fortnight with great faith and regard. This faith is well brought out in the form of proverbs. There are references of the Mahalaya Paksha here and there as can be seen in

म्हाळपक्षांतूलो भट्टु आषाढ मासांतूलो तट्टु

(The priest of Mahalaya Paksha and the pony of Ashada.)

अंबाडो ना म्होणु म्हाळु राष्ट्रना

(The Mahalaya Paksha does not wait for a hog plum.)

For these fourteen days the Brahmins are specially fed and ablutions to the Pitr-s are offered. Due to the grace of the god of death, it has been ordained that offerings made during this period benefit all the departed souls. Charity in the form of food is important during this observance because life depends upon food. Human body is the most important vehicle for realising God. Since food keeps the body fit for Sadhana in realising God, it is treated as precious. Thus the gift of food is considered to be the greatest gift. During this dark fortnight, the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins offer food in plenty to Brahmanas and this is implied in the proverb given above.

### Vratas - Ekadasi

Ekadasi is observed with all solemnity by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. Fasting is prescribed on all Ekadasis, i.e. the 11th day of the lunar fortnight twice a month. The Konkani proverbs often refer to Ekadasi. Examples are-

उबजल्ले कडे एकादशि दिल्लंते कडे शिवरात्रि

(Where she was born, there was Ekadasi (poverty), where she was married there was Sivaratri (more poverty.)

एकादशि दुष्ट खाशि

(Double food for Ekadasi.)

असल्यारि अस्टमि ना जल्यारि एकादशि

(If there is money, the Janmashtami is celebrated and if there is no money, Ekadasi is observed.)

Ekadasi is observed by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins with great faith and devotion. If the mind is fixed on God, the person can be free from the cycles of birth and death. Ekadasi is observed with this view.

The special feature of Ekadasi Vrata is that people observe fast on this day. The proverb एकादशी उप्पास दोणीरि जल्लो (The fast of Ekadasi was on the canoe.) refers to this fast. They observe vigil the whole night and do Japa, sing Kirtanas in praise of Vishnu and do meditation. It is believed that by observing Ekadasi one can very well propitiate Lord Vishnu. All sins are destroyed. The mind is purified. Devotion develops, Love for God becomes intense. Fasting controls passion. It checks emotions. It controls senses. It is a great penance. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always like to lead a life of purity and penance. They always observe such vratas without fail for the destruction of the sins and to have control over the senses, the deadliest enemy on the path of devotion. The mind gets purer by fasting. Fasting is one of the ten canons of Yoga which makes man strong both spiritually and mentally. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins were aware of this fact and hence they gave importance to Vratas like Ekadasi.

### Rituals and Samskaras

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins give priority to the idea of holiness. For them this idea is the highest reality which is humanly approachable. They like it most since it responds in many ways. The action which evokes the response is called ritual.

The Konkani Brahmins followed the sixteen sacraments, the processes of refinement meant for bringing out the

excellence residing in the soul. These people strongly believed in spirituality and rigidly followed these rituals. These are outward signs of the inward or spiritual grace. By the term Samskara we mean, education, refinement, perfection, operation, purificatory rites, sacred ceremony, sanctification, concentration and merit. It is a process by which a person develops, and leads to merit and perfection. These Samskaras are based on faith and they weave the individual into the fabric of the society. The evil influences are removed and beneficial influences are invoked by these rituals. Mainly, Upanayana, Vivaha and Antyesti are mentioned in the Konkani proverbs. Annaprasana and Karnavedha are mentioned in small references here and there. These can be divided into three classes -

Samskaras performed by the father as Upanayana,  
 Samskaras performed by the individual self as Vivaha,  
 and Samskaras performed by descendants - Antyesti.

The dear and near ones perform the sacrifices for the perfect and orderly separation of his soul from the body.

The Samskaras were domestic rites. During their performance, generally prayers were offered for the protection and prosperity of life, children, animals, food, and required facilities.

There are sixteen Samskaras of which there are only stray references to some of them in the Konkani proverbs.

### **Upanayana**

Upanayana is one of the important Samskaras which aims at the transformation of an individual from a general

to a special stage of life. This initiation ceremony ticketed the child's admission to the first Ashrama that of a Brahmacharin. The Konkani Brahmins gave much importance to this function. In Konkani this function is termed as मूंजि which refers to the tying of the string made of Munja grass around the waist of the Brahmacharin. It also consists of the wearing of the sacred thread. References to this function are found in the Konkani proverbs as can be seen in ब्रह्माक मूंजि बांधचे (The thread ceremony of Brahma).

### Vivaha

Greater importance was given to the marriage ritual, a social institution with a religious significance. This function is chiefly aimed at sustaining the family line. One of its objects was the promotion of religion through the performance of domestic rituals. There are a number of references to this Samskara in the Konkani proverbs. The elder children are married first which is implied in the Konkani proverb मामु वाडला शामू व्हर्डीक (Shamu is married while Mamu is older than him.). Astrological considerations played an important part in the settlement of marriages and these were made according to social customs and rules. The proverb पुताक आयिल्लि सोयरीक बप्पाक जल्लि व्हर्डीक (The alliance was made for the son, and the marriage for the father.) in a negative approach, throws some light on these customs. The custom of proposing a marriage is implied in this proverb. Matrimonial relation with an auspicious girl of similar caste and family but of dissimilar Gotra was recommended. A girl with inauspicious marks was avoided. Beauty and feminine virtues in general were considered. The proverbs –

चेल्लेक चोवचाक गेल्लोलो चेल्लो लग्न कोरुनु आयलो  
 (The boy who visited the girl returned after marriage.)  
 चेल्लि चंदि दोळे कुहे  
 (The girl is beautiful, but she is blind.) etc.

refer to this practice in a matrimonial relationship. The proverb कुल गोत्र ऊणे जल्यारीयि मल मूत्र ऊणे ना (Though the family and clan are small, there is no shortage of faeces and urine.) also throws some light on the same context.

The nuptial ceremony was solemnised amidst various rituals performed and mantras recited by the priest. The proverb मंत्र तत्र भट्टु जाण खाण जेवण हांव जाण (The priest knows the mantras and tantras and I know how to eat and drink.) refers to this. The marriage occasion was marked with great festivity and rejoicings. The proverb व्होरेता संगाति जेवण खाण, व्होकले संगाति न्हाण मक्कण (Dinner in the company of the bridegroom and bath in the company of the bride.) gives a detailed account of these rituals, festivity and rejoicings. Invitations for the marriage were sent to all the relatives and friends to attend the ceremonies. The proverbs-

मंकडा व्हरडीकेक कुंकडा लोराण  
 (Procession of hens in the marriage of the monkey.)  
 मंकडा व्हरडीकेक गडवा गायन  
 (The music party of ass in the marriage of the monkey.)

refer to the invitees for a marriage and the rejoicings in a marriage in the form of music. The term लोराण implies the invitees who join in the marriage procession. Mirth was expressed by decoration of the place of marriage with sprouts, leaves, flowers etc. The word मांटव in the proverbs

व्हर्डीके मांटवांत म्हशी वासराक सोहूनु आयलो

(He came in search of the young one of the buffalo in the marriage pandal.)

व्हर्डीक जायने तरि मांटवांतुल्यान गेल्लो कि ना

(Marriage was not conducted; yet he passed through the pandal) etc.

refer to the decorated place of marriage.

Apart from the religious beliefs, rites and ceremonies, Samskaras contain social customs and usages. As these covered the full life of an individual, his physical, mental and spiritual training was combined with them. The proverb लग्न केल्या सिवाय पिशें वच्चना, पिशें गेल्या शिवाय लग्न जायना (The madness cannot be cured until he is married and the marriage cannot be conducted until the madness is cured.) indicates the mental health of a person. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins attach mystery and danger with everything connected with life. It was thought necessary to take precautions against dangers and to give vent to the sense of mystery at various occasions of life. This gave birth to various restrictions. There were taboos connected with lucky and unlucky days and time. These people believe that harmful influences arising from various objects are present in the air associated themselves with particular time and days. Unlucky days and hours are avoided for marriage and other rituals. The word मुहूर्त in the proverbs

गणपती व्हर्डीके फल्या मुहूर्तु

(The Muhurta for the marriage of Ganesha is early in the morning.)

आवाहन विसर्जन एकचि मुहूर्ताक करू न्हयें

**(The invoking and the dispersal cannot be done at the same Muhurta.)**

refers to this fact. At the time of marriage which must take place at a particular auspicious moment, a necklace of 'Pirduk' (sacred beads) is tied round the neck of the bride. The proverb - मुळता येळेरि सरसमयि पिर्डुकयि एक करुक नज्ज (Do not mix the mustard with Pirduk (sacred beads) at the time of Muhurta.) refers to this 'Pirduk'. If it is not done so at the very moment misfortune is likely to befall. Symbolism played a great part in the Samskaras. The symbol of material object conveyed mental and spiritual significance. Rice is supposed to be the symbol of prosperity. It was thought that by the contact of rice, men were bestowed with prosperity. The proverb लग्नाक हळ्ळोलो तण्डूळु शेसेक खर्डोलो (The rice brought for the marriage was used for the rituals connected with death.) manifests the same idea.

Apart from Upanayana and marriage ceremonies there are some Konkani proverbs which refer to Namakarana, Annaprasana etc. The proverb मजरा साटिंट धोर्नु सूण्या बारसो थाइ सोदचे (To investigate from the ceremony of the sixth day of the birth of the cat upto the ceremony of the sixth month of the birth of the dog.) can be quoted as an example.

### **Antyeshti**

The Samskaras accompanied man upto his death. The funeral rites attended him on his last journey. This is called Agnisamskara or Charamasamskara. This is the last Samskara he passes through in his life. He never comes back again. The proverb is समयु वत्तचि मर्नीषु मरतयि परतना (Time is fast moving, man dies and he never returns).

According to the established custom, the body as soon as it is declared dead is placed on a bed of Darbha grass on the ground. It is then wrapped in a new cloth and is taken on a bier. The Konkani proverb आसतना वत्ता पालकेरि मेल्या वत्ता वाश्यारि (When a man is alive, he travels in a palanquin and when dead, he travels on a bamboo-bier.) refers to this bier. It is then taken to the cemetery which is situated outside the limits of the inhabited town. The proverb मसणांतु व्हेल्लेले मोडे (The dead body that is taken to the burial ground.) indicates this act. On reaching the crematorium the dead body is placed on the pyre specially prepared for the purpose and is cremated amidst chanting of sacred texts. The proverb चितेचो उज्जो निवंता चिंतेचो नीवना (The fire of the funeral pyre will be extinguished but that of the mind will not.) refers to cremation. The firewood used in the pyre is either the ordinary wood of a mango tree or in the case of the upper classes aloe and khadira wood. The proverb अंब्या राकडारि घालतकचि बुद्धि येता (He is enlightened when he is put on the firewood of the mango tree.) refers to this position of the dead man. Sacred ashes gathered upon the third day after the cremation, are put in urns and taken to the holy rivers for immersion therein.

Purification rites in connection with death form an important theme in the cultural history of the Konkani people. The proverb श्मशान वैराग्य प्रसूत वैराग्य (The pollution caused by death and the pollution caused by birth.) refers to the pollution caused by death. A much wider range of rules can be seen established. A number of ceremonies are performed to help the soul of the dead person to conquer and purify its sheaths. Mantras are used for all

purposes, the regular and even vibrations of which enter into the Sukshma Sarira which is very sensitive and easily affected. The efforts of the survivors are to provide the dead with food and guide his footsteps to the paramount abode of the dead. The Pinda or the ball of rice is offered to the dead. The Konkani proverbs

अरिसत्याक भुक्के दीना अन्न मेल्लेत्याक पिंडदान

(He does not give food to the living father, but offers oblations to him when he is dead.)

मेल्लेले अम्मा पिंड वळ्ळे

(Oblations to the dead mother.)

अयित्तने भिक्कारयाक दीना अन्न मेल्लेल्याक करता पिंडदान

(He does not give alms to the beggar, but offers oblations to the dead.)

throw some light on this system. A feast which contains various dishes was given to Brahmanas on the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth day. The proverbs

अय्ये तेरावो म्हणूय जल्लो घारि खेत्तिन म्हणूयि जल्लि

(The thirteenth day of the death of the grand mother was celebrated and the black-gram-cakes were also eaten.)

आयि मेल्लि म्हाणु न्हय रडता घरियो खावंचाक रडता

(He is not crying over the death of his grandmother, but he is crying for the black-gram-cakes.)

refer to one of such dishes prepared for the function. Lord Vishnu is prayed to for the salvation of the dead.

In the holy rite of Sraddha, the ritualistic scraping,

digging and sprinkling of water with Darbha are performed. Balls of rice, food stuffs, different kinds of flowers, scents, charitable gifts and ornaments are offered for propitiating the Brahmanas who in turn were to perform the rites for the dead. The Konkani proverb घर बाग विकले ब्राह्मणाचे आनी श्राद्ध वळ्ळे पित्रांचे (The property of Brahmana was sold and the Sraddha of the fore-fathers was performed.) refers to such Sraddha which is very expensive. The proverb - देवकार्याचे वायसा पान चुकुन्हयें वंकुन्हयें (The oblations of Sraddha should be free from errors.) gives an account of the offerings given to the manes with the system and practice of this act. सदसदा वागा बपैली वर्षीक (The Sraddha of a tiger's father.) also indicates the Sraddha rite performed by the Konkani Brahmins.

Besides these Samskaras there are other rituals which are performed by a householder. The householder has to perform some rituals, the observation of which constantly reminds him of the Atman and he is urged to seek that even when he is alive. The role of Samskaras in knitting man with his immediate society, his forefathers and with nature at large, is very significant. The five Mahayajnas prescribed for a householder link him with the Devas, the unseen forces of creation. The Pitruyajna is a daily requirement asking man to remember his forefathers. The Manushyayajna asks man to treat a guest as a God. Bhutayajna encourages man to consider the entire creation as his kin. Offering food to birds and animals and water to trees are all rites of great social merit. Brahmayajna is a daily ritual of thanksgiving to the great Rishis who left us an inheritance of spiritual wisdom, civilization and personal ethics.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture was ultimately derived from spirituality, mainly Dharma. The diversity of Dharma can all be traced to the origins in the root-pattern of rituals as evolved in temples, shrines, domestic and collective rites and in festivals. This spiritual culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins is traced in the folk sayings of the little tradition.

## Chapter - V

# Ethical Values

The founder of the ancient Hindu or Aryan society and the culture of the spiritual humanity was Manu from whose name the term Manava arises. He was the great leader who survived the mythical flood and established a new social order reflecting a return to spiritual values from a materialistic humanity. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins closely followed this social order of spiritual unity for strengthening the spiritual foundation of their society. The all- pervading concept of Dharma regulated the norms of conduct of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture. They always followed the laws laid down by Manu, the laws for the development of the inner self of man. The term Brahmana according to them was the practice of sattva, purity, will and energy. These four energies are the four main powers of nature in the human beings. The Hindu values of life give special importance to these powers. The belief in the most constant and intended action, the daily practice which is the measure of the direction of the evolution of the soul and the effect upon the world soul forced the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins to strictly follow the Acharas.

### **Acharas**

Acharas are the ethical means relating to conduct and behaviour. Manu thinks that the actual ways of living of the best people in a society should be the standard of morality

in that society. Conduct is indeed the three-fourths of life and the right judgements are to be drawn from the conduct of the best men. The essence of morality is well understood to be more in practice than in theory and we find Dharma defined as Achara. Acharas are constituted in such a way towards each other as well as towards other creatures that everyone may remain happy and contented. The Konkani proverb places this principle thus -

जगा सुख दुख आपले, आपले जगाचे  
भो व्होड भाग्य हे समझतल्याचे

(Happiness of others is mine, and mine is of others,  
he who knows this is considered to be lucky.)

What constitutes a community is this notion of voluntary sharing of "goods" in wider sense, really of values. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always developed a value system which helped everyone to love his fellow beings. They believed that this forms the basics of good conduct by which one acquires long life, decayless wealth and this good conduct kills all the inauspicious traits of a person. Their practice in the society was ultimately crystallised into a body of customs and conventions which governed the workings of the ordinary people. The Konkani proverb सुख जांगका दुःख मनाक सांगका (Happiness may be conveyed to everybody and unhappiness only to one's mind.) places before us the best convention prevalent among the society.

By the Ethical Science or Acharavigyan we mean a definite and systematically arranged series of rules of conduct in their proper relations to each other and of the underlying principle of these relations. The Konkani

proverbs lay stress on the ethical conduct of the members of their society. They provide strong guidelines for developing morals of a man. Because they very well know that following Acharas, one is sure to keep his moral side strong and present before others an ideal of morality. The proverb says - आचारु चलतल्याक विचारु ऊणे (He who closely follows the customs does not suffer). This proverb represents the strong moral background of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society. Ethics is morality, right conduct, and in order to know what is right we have to understand something about man and his surroundings. Object of morality is to secure the welfare of all beings. Achara consists of this morality. By following Acharas one can live in harmony with others. For such a life the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins have put down a code of conduct and this is well represented in the Konkani proverbs. The proverbs advocate this code of conduct in the form of what is to be done and what is not to be done. Some examples are-

एक उतरान मोळ्ळेले मन धा उतरान सम जायना

(Mind that is affected by one word cannot be cured by ten words.)

खोंचूनु उल्लोवंचाकय वेंचूनु उल्लोवंचे सस्सार

(It is better to utter a few chosen words than to utter sarcastic words.)

दुर्स्सेरया खातिर फोंडु खोळ्ळो पायु निसर्लुनु आपण पोळ्ळो

(He who made a trap for others, fell into it himself.)

बडिड मोळ्यारि दोरियेन बांदवें मन मोळ्यारि कसल्यान बांदवें

(The broken stick can be tied with a string, but how can the broken mind be tied?)

एकल्यान गायि मारल्यारि आनियेकल्यान बैल मारन्हये

(If one kills the cow, it is not proper to kill the ox too.)

मापांत पाप करन्हये

(Do not cheat anybody in measurements.)

उपद्रा पसि उप्पास बरो

(It is better to fast than to disturb others.) etc.

Each Gowda Saraswat Brahmin is supposed to be pure by thought, word and deed. The above proverbs advise people to this effect. This purity is the essence of Achara i.e. good conduct. This is Dharma. This is to be practised because Achara is the greatest Dharma. It is said -

आचारलक्षणो धर्मः सन्तरस्त्वाचारलक्षणः

आगमानां हि सर्वेषामाचारः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते

आचारप्रभवो धर्मो धर्मादायुर्विवर्धते

आचारात्त्वभते ह्यायुराचारात्त्वभते श्रियम्

The mark of Dharma is Achara. The Konkani proverb आचारु चलतल्याक विचारु ऊणे (He who closely follows the customs does not suffer) summarises everything about Achara. It is the mark of good and is higher than all other teachings. This Achara - Dharma - enhances life. By following this man attains life with prosperity and fame, here and hereafter. The Konkani proverb अप्पण चांग जल्यारि जग चांग (If you are correct, others are also correct.) gives the essence of Achara with an advice that one should always follow Acharas.

The measure of who we are in life, is not how much we own or how people regard us. It is only that portion of the eternal we have discovered in life, goes with us at death. To understand the eternal we are bound to

understand and regard our fellow beings since everyone is part of the eternal being एकं सद्विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति. This can be carried out only by practising good conduct i.e. truth, non-violence, benevolence, compassion, charity etc.

## Truth

Truth is the best companion for man in his life. Truth alone prevails.

सत्यं सत्सु सदा धर्मं सत्यं धर्मः सनातनः

सत्यमेव नमस्येत् सत्यं हि परमा गतिः.

Hence the person who is engaged in right action is given instructions like सत्यं वद, सत्यमेव जयते, सत्यं ब्रूयात् etc. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always appreciated truth. The Konkani proverbs speak of truth as

सत्याक सोळा वर्षा

(Truth is ever sixteen years of age.)

सत्याक नाशु ना

(Truth will never be destroyed.) etc.

Truth is the only Dharma of the good. It is Brahman itself. So it always remains untainted. ऋतं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म The Supreme Brahman is the right, the truth. Truth is imperishable, unchanging and eternal. सत्याक मरण ना (Truth never dies.) is the proverbial saying. By practising truth the mind becomes pure. आंग उदकां नितळ, मन सत्यां नितळ (The body is clean in water, the mind is pure in truth.) says the Konkani proverb. Truth is the highest Yajna (sacrifice). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe in truth and according to them that which matters is how much they live up to the quality of truth which is not deceived. They know very well and

practise to the effect that truth should be free from deception. The Konkani proverb सत्या फूडे शाणपण चलना (There are no tricks in truth.) refers to this. Tricks are not entertained in truth. This religion of truth is not a thing of one life. It is the real project of the soul from life to life. It is the essence and totality of the entire being. This is not an organised belief but the emergence of consciousness. It has its order in life, an order which unfolds the creative and spiritual potentialities of life.

The thirteen forms of truth are truthfulness, equality, self-control, absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self-possession and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness. There are references of these in the Konkani proverbs. For example -दया वियां गदि वांगत्यारि वड्डता (Compassion grows like the planted seed). Charity shows liberality and this character is well-known in Hindu tradition from time immemorial. The distinction between the rich and the poor is as old as Hindu civilisation and the moralists always try to remove the barrier of inequality. Charity is very much emphasised in Hindu culture and the same is the case with the Gowda Saraswat culture. It is the central virtue of the Vedic ethics. A number of Konkani proverbs can be seen which emphasise the **importance of charity**:

तुरत दान महापुण्य

(Instant gift is considered as great merit.)

दानाक दान समाधान

(Gifts are returned through gifts alone.)

दानाक ना धर्माक ना

(It is used neither for gift nor for giving alms.)

दानाक मेळ्ळले धर्माक गेल्ले

(That which was received as a gift was given away in alms.) etc.

Charity is considered to be the highest merit in life. The main feature of most of the ceremonies has been the donation of various gifts, mainly cows to the Brahmanas. The proverb दाना गायचे दांत मेजचें ना or दान मेळ्ळले गायचे दांत चोवंचें ना (Do not count the teeth of a gifted cow.) refers to this donation. The spirit of charity in the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society exhibits itself in diverse ways. A Grihastha is supposed to follow Panchamahayajnas, the basic principle of which is nothing other than charity. The underlying principle is that of the helpfulness to the needy.

From these qualities arises virtue which is inseparably connected with prosperity and happiness of life. On the contrary anger, lust, dejection, delusion, cynicism, wrongful activity, greed, envy, jealousy, annoyance, sullen hate or malice, scorn and fear – are the thirteen vices, forms of untruth, which bring misery in life. The Konkani proverbs here and there refer to some of these. For example -

कोपु हक्का नाशु संतोषु वेगाव्याक नाशु

(Anger destroys the self, but happiness destroys others.)

एक कोप्पान बांयंतु उडकि मारल्यारि शें कोप्पान ऊच एवंचाक जायना

(If you jump into the well due to 'one anger' at one moment, you cannot come out of it with 'hundred angers'.)

जाळा व्याधीक ओखद ना

(There is no medicine for envy.)

## Dharma and Adharma

Achara or Dharma can be practised only if one is able to discriminate right from wrong or Dharma from Adharma. At the level of culture this distinction is a basic one although at a higher stage this can be transcended. For a successful practice of Achara one must clearly understand and follow Dharma. It is only a difference between balance and imbalance of life, bondage and release of the Atman. Dharma in its pure form is Daiva, and Adharma, Asura. Many criteria, external and internal, are laid down for distinguishing between right and wrong. The Gods were the guardians of the natural order and they became the guardians of the moral order too. They helped and strengthened those who conformed to laws, while their punishment would certainly fall upon those who neglected or defied these standards of action. The Konkani proverb says

जांचे मन भोळे तांका देवु दित्ता केळे

जांचे मन फाड तांका देवु दित्ता थापट

(To those who are simple God gives plantain, to those who are evil, God gives a blow.)

- The Konkani proverb उदारि देवळांतु वच्ये ऊणे धांपिल्ले तुरंगांतु वच्ये चड (Only a few people go to the open temple, but most of the people go to the closed tunnel.) indicates the psychological factor of human beings who always show a tendency to act wrongly than to do the rightful. Law, order and regularity must be found everywhere and sin creeps in when these are disobeyed by human weaknesses. The proverb has to say -एक वारया दोणि बुड्डता, एक कीटीन घर जळता (The boat is drowned in the water just by a stroke

of wind and the house is burnt just by a spark of fire). Here it is said metaphorically that a small amount of sin is enough to destroy a valuable life. Hence it is indirectly advised not to do wrong. Further the law of Karma is always in vogue and those who do wrong reap always adverse results of their actions. Through another metaphor the proverbial saying मीट खेल्लोलो उदाक पित्तोलो (One who has eaten salt, will drink water.) makes it clear that wrong actions always bring wrong results. In the proverb अन्यायाक बिरमति साक्षि (Evil is the witness for injustice.) it is evident that Anyaya or Adharma is always ruled over by the Asuras. Life is an eternal conflict between Daiva and Asura and one must try to conquer Adharma by following Dharma (Achara). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins were very particular about this. According to them the right conduct consists in the desires, thoughts and actions that help oneself and others to tread the Nivritti Marga, the path that leads to union with the Supreme Self. Special rules were formed for this pure life and these are reflected in the Konkani proverbs -

1. To give joy to another is righteousness, to give pain is sin - दीवो अप्पण जळता उजवाडु दुर्स्सेरयांक दित्ता  
(The lamp burns itself, but gives light to others.)
2. Let not any man do unto another any act that he wisheth not done to himself by others.  
दुर्स्सेरयां करता निंदा, ताजान मेळता अवंदा  
(If you insult others, it is sure that you will be insulted.)  
दुर्स्सेरयांगेले सोदि गूण, अपणाले पळ्य अवगूण  
(One must look for the good qualities of others and the bad qualities of oneself.)

3. Let not any one do an act that injures another nor any that he feels shame to do -

दुस्सोरया सातिर फोडु खोल्लो पायु निरसोर्नु अप्पण पोळ्ळो

(If you make a plot against somebody, it is sure, that you yourself will become a victim to it.)

4. Let him not do to another what is not good for himself.

फटीरि मारलें तरीकयि पोटारि मारन्हयें

(You can beat anyone, but do not deprive him of his morsel.)

This is because the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strongly believed that आत्मैव देवताः सर्वाः सर्वमात्मन्यवस्थितम् and एकरस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव. Thus they believe in the action which promotes union. The five daily sacrifices attributed to the Garhastya and Vanaprastha promote union. The three debts in Brahmacharya, Garhastya and Vanaprastha by performing sacrifices and meditation also promote union.

Discharge of duties is a virtue, non-discharge is a vice. Fulfilment of duties brings virtue and the opposite action is addiction to vices. The greatest truth is the unity of self amidst the diversity of non-self. Hence always try to do the rightful and be dutiful. The proverbs have to say -

न्यायु सोणु अन्यायु चलतत्याक देयु हातु दीना

(God does not help those who do injustice to others.)

न्यायाक नीतीचे बळ अन्यायाक दुंक्याचे बळ

(Justice is strong by morality and injustice has the strength of a blow.)

All actions which cause harm to others or increase falsehood and illusion in the world should be avoided since they bar

us from entering the realm of God. Time is moving fast and we must do good in this limited time. The proverbs run thus -

ब्रेपण कोरचो वेळु मेंधा मणके धावता

(The time allotted for doing good passes like the cloud.)

बरे केल्लेले वरता पाड फाटीक लागता

(Good deeds last for ever and the difficulties are set aside.)

Only good actions ever exist.

## Karma

Karma means action. Life is a repeated action which produces certain subtle or mysterious results. It is these results that determine our future condition and the state of the world we live in. The very breath of human life is after all work. Under no circumstances cessation of work is possible. Man cannot win freedom from action by abstaining from activity, nor by mere renunciation. The Konkani proverb is - कर्म सोणु मेळ्ळेले ज्ञान रांदय नत्तिले सित्ता जेवण (The knowledge without Karma is like meals without curries). Each action has a certain effect which determines who we are and what we will become. In the Upanishads this secret doctrine of Karma and rebirth is first explained in rational and philosophical terms. Karma as a spiritual law here applies to the whole reality of man. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins strongly believed in the doctrine of Karma. There are a number of proverbs relating to this doctrine. All its aspects are well brought out in these proverbs.

Karma is treated as most important because it contains inherently its coming effect. The idea of accomplishment

of the next world was essentially based on the belief in the transmigration of souls through the cycle of birth and death. This is depended on the principle of action. The law of action of cause and effect or of causation is unavoidable. The Konkani proverb - मीट खेल्लोलो उदाक पित्तोलो (One who has eaten salt will drink water.) refers to this cause and effect.

Further the proverbs -

**कर्म धुत्यारि परिहारु ना**

(Washing of the evil deeds is not an expiation.)

**कर्मातु बरेयलेले जन्मातु सुटना**

(Destiny can never be prevented.) etc.

are indications to the law of Karma. One is sure to get the results of one's Karma, good or bad.

Karma, broadly speaking, may be said to be the continuance of the nature of the act and each act contains within itself the past and future. That is why the proverb says गावु साणु परगावातु गेल्यारायि प्रारब्ध सोणा (Fate does not leave anybody even though one leaves his own village). Prarabdhā is the result of the past Karma which acts according to the natural law. Nobody can avoid enjoying the results, good or bad, of these Karmas. कर्मणा गहना गतिः is the dictum. The effect is but the nature of action and cannot exist distinct from its cause. Being action, Karma has its operation in time. The proverb represents this theory in the following manner-

**केल्लोले कर्म फाटि घेता**

(The results of the actions always accompany the person.)

केल्लेले कर्म ह्याचि जन्मांतु खावंका

(You have to repay for your actions in this birth itself.)

केल्लेले खावंका आयिल्ले भोगुका

(You must reap the results of your actions and you must be ready to suffer.)

मारलेले पाप खानु परिहारु

(You will have to suffer for your bad actions)

That is why these proverbs try to make one conscious of his actions in a beautiful manner as in केल्लेले उरता रांदिल्लै सरता (The actions last for ever, but the cooked food is finished by eating.). Of course the results are experienced by the doer of actions. The seed of Karma arises in the mind, it is worked out through speech and other actions of the body. Three-fold are the paths of men according to Karma. The sloka runs thus —

शुभाशुभफलं कर्म मनो वाग्देहसंभवं

कर्मजा गतयो नृणामुत्तमाधममध्यमाः

The whole universe comes into existence and vanishes solely under the influence of the law of Karma. The proverb is देवान दिल्ले कर्मान व्हेल्ले (God gave the benefits and they were taken away by actions). One is sure to endure the good or bad results of his actions. *Panchatantra* says -

यस्माच्च येन च यदा च यथा च यच्च यावच्च यत्र च शुभाशुभमात्मकर्म तस्माच्च तेन च तदा च तथा च तच्च तावच्च तत्र च कृतान्तवशादुपैति

(2/20)

The whole thing is summarised in the Konkani proverbs आजि करि पाप मूल दिता जाप (If you commit sin, the results

are obtained without delay) and दिल्या मापान घेवचे पडता (As you sow so you reap). Hence the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always prefer good actions. They believe that without action there is no knowledge. The knowledge attained without actions is just like the rice eaten without curry.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believed that Karma is a natural law, not a moral law. We hurt ourselves through the violation of our own emotional nature. All bad or evil thoughts result in bad actions which at first hurt our minds, as the mind is their field of manifestation. The proverb has to say पापाक मन साक्षि मनाक देवु साक्षि (Mind is the witness for sin and God is the witness for the mind). The results of Karma are absolutely inviolable in the mental, moral and material worlds. No good deed can escape its reward and no evil deed its penalty. From this law of Karma, arises the doctrine of merits and demerits. Man's merit and demerit depend on good and bad deeds done by him. Whatever is good yields pleasant and praiseworthy result and whatever is evil yields painful and abominable result. A virtuous man or a doer of good deeds is bold and straightforward. A sinner is always frightened. The proverb says - पाप अर्राल्ले कडे भय (Where there is sin, there is fear). A sinner cannot withstand the dangers, his heart always throbs and he always looks at others with suspicion. पाप केल्लोलो वेगळ्याक नमगना (The sinner does not trust anybody.), says the Konkani proverb.

The good and bad actions always yield their good and bad results - जाणते करता पाप भुरगी दिता जाप (If you commit sins knowingly, the results are reaped by the children.) says the Konkani proverb. These results affect the future

generations also. The concept of heaven and hell arise from these results. Konkani proverbs speak of this concept here and there. The proverb नरकाक णव्व वाटो स्वर्गाक एकीचि (There are nine ways to hell and one for heaven.) indicates the same idea. According to this proverb good actions lead to heaven and bad to hell. Man has always an inclination to do evil. Hence the proverb says, the ways to hell are nine and to heaven there is only one way. Wrong actions always bring wrong results, says the proverb - पापियान गेल्लेले कडे पाताळ (Wherever goes the sinner there is the nether world). He cannot avoid the results of his bad actions. Pilgrimage to holy places in no way influences the bad results of his actions. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always think positively. Hence they believe that all the sins are expiable. पापाक प्रायश्चित्त आसा (Each sin has an expiation). They do not hate the sinner but only hate the sins. This is reflected in the proverb - पापियालो देवु म्होणु फत्तोरु मारचो वे ? (Is it proper to throw stones on the Gods, since they are worshipped by the sinners?). The doctrine of Karma taught the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins that there is an absolute inner justice in life which cannot be violated. Suffering and misfortune are only touchstones which help them to look deeper and see the real state of things. They believe in the highest action, i.e. कर्मफलत्याग, to give up attachment to action and act according to the will of God. They lay emphasis on actions performed with complete detachment and therefore ascribe the highest spiritual attainments to those accruing from deeds that are wholly impersonal. The essence of escape from Karma is to free oneself from desires. The sense of achievement is based on the success with which the individual fulfils his duties. Anyhow it is not advisable

to sit idle without doing work, work itself can be worship of God. If the work is done meticulously it is sure that you will get the results without fail. Success is always bound up with work. The proverb runs thus काम केल्यारि कामेलि जाता (If you work hard, you will become a worksman). Many of the Konkani proverbs always lay emphasis on the importance of perseverance. For example -

सर्वानि पालकेतु बेसल्यारि व्हावंतले कोण ?

(If all persons sit in a palanquin, who will carry it?)

अळस्याक दीसु सरना काम करतल्याक राति सानि जायना

(For the lazy, the day does not move fast, and for the working people night does not become short.)

हांव गोरि अक्का गोरि हळदि वाटतले कोण

(I am fair, my sister is fair, who will grind turmeric ?)

etc.

### The proverbs-

संसारा गेल्यारि सोवे परमांतु गेल्यारि भज्जे

(One who joins the gossip, returns with scoldings, one who goes to the compound returns with leaves for food.)

रत्रां गेल्लेल्यान वज्जे हळ्ळे सेज्जारि गेल्लेल्यान झागडे हळ्ळे

(One who went to the forest returned with a load of fire-wood and one who visited the neighbour returned with quarrel.)

कार्यानि कार्य कोरका उतरानी न्हय

(Do not brag, act silently.)

सांगका थोडे कोरका घड

(Speak less and do more.)

assert that exertion or action is superior to speech. Intense activity is always silent adoration. Hence duties are to be discharged in time, says the Konkani proverb - हुन्नारि हून केल्यारि काम सर्सार जत्ता (If you do your work promptly, you can finish it easily).

## Character

The rationale of prosperity is briefly given as exertion, self-control, skill, carefulness, steadiness, memory and commencement of acts after mature deliberations etc. Prosperity never resides in one who is addicted to evil ways, who denies godhead, who is idle and who hath not his sense under control. There are Konkani proverbs dealing with the evil effects of these bad qualities and good effects of exertion, self-respect, self-control, carefulness etc. For example -

मानु वत्तचि हीनु जत्ता

(When the self-respect is lost, one becomes worthless.)

सूख जनांक सांगका दुःख मनांक सांगका

(Happiness may be conveyed to everybody and unhappiness only to one's mind.)

उष्टे तोंडान अबद्ध उल्लोवंचे, दुर्सरया कडच्यान उत्तर घेवंचे

(If you utter undue words, you will be scolded by others.)

एक चुकीन गांवु लरसता एक मारान जीवु वत्ता

(The whole village is burnt due to a small error and the life ends due to a single blow.)

एक उतरान मोळ्ळेले मन धा उतरानि सम जायना

(The mind affected by one word cannot be cured by ten words.)

ररतो चुक्कूनु गेल्यारि दुबारि चोवंकुचे पडता

(One who has missed the path has to travel again.)

दुरस्तेरयांगेले सोदि गूण अपणांगेले पळ्य अवगुण

(Look for the good qualities of others and bad qualities of oneself.)

The advice implied in these proverbs is that one should not follow bad ways. Good action always results in good character and character is the central factor with regard to a man's life. The real man in him speaks through his character, his own innate nature and disposition. There is advice in the proverbs to build up one's character. Some examples are -

अपणाली प्रतिष्ठा आपण करुन्हयें

(One must not praise oneself.)

कार्य करनरतना कलह करुन्हयें

(Do not quarrel without a reason.)

जेविल्ले पत्रारि हागूनु घालून्हयें

(Do not excrete on the leaf on which you have taken food.)

पतळ गूवातु फत्तोरु मारुन्हयें

(Do not throw stones in the excrement.)

प्रत्यक्ष देकिकल्लें तरि परामर्शूनु पोळोवुंका

(Direct perception must be comprehended after critical reasoning.)

प्रीति असल्यारीयि रीति सोणयें

(Although you have a great liking for something or somebody do not give up the manners.)

फाटीरि मारलें तरीकयि पोटारि मारुन्हयें

(You can beat any body, but do not deprive him of his morsel.) etc.

Character is fundamental thing in man, rather, character is the man. शीलं परं भूषणम् says Bhartrihari. Character always becomes a veritable power for those who possess it. There is nothing impossible of attainment for persons of character. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always believe in character formation and there are a number of proverbs to this effect. The first and foremost quality expected from a person of good character is obedience and devotion towards the elders i.e. parents, preceptors etc. The ethical value of the worship of parents is very high. The Konkani proverbs -

म्हलगड्याले उत्तर प्रमाण कोरका

(The advice of the elders must be followed closely.)

बप्पाक बप्पा म्होळ्ळोना जल्यारि केळ्याक बप्पा म्होणतोलो

(If you hesitate to address your father properly, you will call the barber as father.) etc.

point to this. The proverbs-

घोल्लीरि बेरसोलो म्होणु वोयि उड्डूक नज्ज

(Thinking that you are seated on a pot belly, do not jump over the fence.)

आक उड्डता म्होणु पाक उडल्यारि गोबरा राशीरि पडतले

(If the feathers fly in the air like the seeds of Calotropis, it is sure that they will come down.)

दिव्वोडु वत्ता म्होणु वोत्तांतूल्यान गायंडोळु गेल्यारि कोर्पुनु वोत्तोलो

(If the earth-worm crawls in the sunlight like the snake, it will be burnt).

warn the common man against ego and self-conceit. Self-conceit always renders one incapable of doing justice to others. It makes one the constant centre of all talk. Self-praise and slander of others are two inevitable concomitants of a boisterous vanity. These always cause fear. They destroy the blissfulness of all the other virtues possessed by man. But the wise people neither exult on receiving honours, nor they grieve at insults. *Sukraniti* points out how pride leads to certain evils (SN. III-172-186). Egotism in all its shapes and forms is an object of supreme moral aversion. The Konkani proverbs emphasise this. Spiritual purity is attained by the practice of various virtues. Inward perfection can be attained only through good character. A person of good character is the home of all virtues, of all graces and of all finer humanity.

Control over anger is a necessary part of a course of virtuous actions. It is an essential constituent of perfect self-mastery which alone effectively distinguishes man as a controller of circumstances. Those who practise restraint and passify the wrath of others succeed in overcoming difficulties in life. Hence the Konkani proverbs warn people against anger.

एक कोप्पान बायतु उडकि मारत्यारि शें कोप्पान उंचारि  
एवुंचाक जायना

(If you jump into the well due to 'one anger' you will not be able to come out of it with 'hundred angers'.)  
कोपु हकका नाशु संतोषु वेगळ्याक नाशु

(Anger destroys the self, happiness destroys others.)

An angry person always remains unfit for true discrimination between right and wrong. He commits sin and his actions always remain fruitless.

Desire is the root of all miseries. A man that is influenced by affection is tortured by desire. Desire has no bounds. The Konkani proverbs speak of desire as an ever-growing vice as in

आशा म्हन्तारि जायना

(Desire does not grow old.)

मेळ्ता तशी आशा चडि

(The more you get, the more you desire.)

खाता तशी आशा चडि

(The more you eat, The more you desire to eat.)

One who has desire always is affected by greed. अस्सिल्याक आशा चडि नत्तिल्याक आशा ना (Those who have something, desire for more and those who have nothing have no desire). Greed always results in harm. अति आशेक अनर्थ (Excessive desire brings calamities.). Contentment is always held as a virtue and greed, a vice. Contentment is perceived as the promoter of progress in life. Hence contentment is to be practised. The Konkani proverb indirectly advises thus - आशा चब्ब्यारि आयुर्स चडता वे? (If at all desires grow, does the life extend?) Life is very short and it is advisable to practise contentment. Greed always destroys man. It is to be controlled. One who is desirous of enjoyment always longs for this enjoyment. खात्याक आस्त भोव न्हात्याक चिक्कोलु भोव (He who eats, desires for more, he who bathes, becomes more

dirty). According to the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins contentment is the most desirable attitude because it alone can lead to the Supreme Self.

## Friendship

Friendship has an important role to play in the life of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins and this is well-reflected in the Konkani proverbs. Friends always help in the character-building of a person. Hence good friends are always preferred by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. They always aim at the highest friendship which springs out of itself. According to them a friend in need is a friend indeed. आपत्कालाक पावंदो खरु मित्रु (A friend in need is a friend indeed). The soul draws soul as the magnet draws iron. The role of friendship is appreciated to a great extent by these people. Whether rich or poor, happy or miserable, good or bad, a friend is the greatest refuge for a person. आपदां च परित्राणं शोकसन्तापमेषजम् says *Panchatantra* (2/62). Witnessing such an affection people can forsake wealth, comfort and even their native land for the sake of their friends. The Konkani proverb says एकु प्राणु दोनि देण i.e. (One soul and two bodies). Here is a glimpse of a very high type of friendship based on pure love. Such a friend is a true friend whose heart always melts at the grief of his fellowmen, who tries to do good to others, who serves without asking and is a protector at proper time. Friendship with unworthy persons does not last long. The fundamental feature of genuine friendship is the existence of the identity of souls. A true friend is one's centre of affection, the true seat of confidence the unfailing partner in one's joys and sorrows and the due helper in all difficulties. The essence of true friendship is

mutual love, mutual fidelity and mutual service.

The character and wisdom of friends should be carefully looked into. An important qualification of a friend is that he must possess a lofty character. A friendship with a righteous person makes man righteous while that with a non-righteous person makes him bad. The Konkani proverb says - गायचे वासरा लगि पळ्यारि तण खत्ता सूण्या पेटट्या लगि पळ्यारि गू खत्ता. (If you are in the company of a calf, you will eat grass and if you are in the company of a dog, you will eat excrement). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe that men form their character from their association and environment. Therefore, the company one chooses should be well chosen. The very sight and touch of the dishonest, and association with them cause diminution of merit and men never attain purity of soul in this case. He that is grateful, virtuous, truthful, large hearted and devoted should be desired for a friend. A friend should not be entertained otherwise, says the proverb - पिश्या मित्राकय बुद्धंतु शत्रु बरो (An intelligent enemy is better than a mad friend).

### Transitoriness of the world

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins have formulated an objective moral law constituting the eternal moral order of the universe called Dharma. They believe that it is only in carrying out the command of duty that the self is a moral agent. Self is only the bare form of the moral law and all activities originate from the physical universe, which is conditioned by physical necessity. According to them the world of phenomena is the realm of Maya, the product of ignorance, which in turn is generated by superimposing names and forms. The empirical world is thus the world

of appearances. This illusion of the world is well brought out in the Konkani proverbs. For example -

आजि अस्सिल्लो फायि ना

(One who is alive today, does not exist tomorrow.)

आयचो रायु फायचो भिक्कारि

(Today, a king, tomorrow, a beggar.)

आजि रडतल्लो फायि हसतोलो

(He who cries today, laughs tomorrow.)

आजि मेल्यारि फायि दोनि

(If you die today, tomorrow is the second day.)

All these proverbs aim at explaining the transitoriness of the world. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins know very well the difference between the eternal soul and the transitory world, yet they recommend both of them in their proper places. Hence the Konkani proverb संसार राकूनु परमार्थ साधका (For concentrating on Brahman, you must first follow the manners of the universe.) and also that संसारातु उंचारि अस्सुका परमार्थातु मूळातु वोच्युक (You must be high in the universe, and go deep into the roots of the truth). There are ideas represented in the proverbs which speak of the illusory and transitory world as in आयले वारे गेल्ले वारे ताजे कसले चेरे चेरे? (The wind came and disappeared, what is the use of discussing it?). The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins treat the soul as most important as is reflected in गोडाकयि जीवु गोडु (The life is sweeter than jaggery.) and एक जीवु रादाशिव (Only one life and it is God.). But they are aware of the difficulties of the pathway to God. Hence they prefer devotion to Moksha. The proverb says भक्ति नासतना मुक्ति मेळना (Without devotion, salvation cannot be obtained.) and शक्ती सिवाय भक्ति ना भक्ती

सिवाय मुक्ति ना (There is no devotion without strength and there is no salvation without devotion). The difficulties of the divine path is well expressed in the proverb लक्षाक एकु भक्तु कोटीक एकु मुक्तु (One devotee among one lakh and one liberated soul among crores). The common people are rather interested in selfishness. They do not want to discriminate good from evil. The proverbs draw a real picture of such selfish people as can be seen in -

अपणाले कार्य महाकार्य वेगळ्याले कज्जुळ्यी

(Own affairs are big, but others' affairs are nuts.)

उष्टे हत्तान कायळ्याक अंबूण्णा

(He won't drive away even the crow with the hand on which there are remnants of food.) etc.

Such people always prefer selfishness to selfless service which is the only way to salvation. The proverb स्वार्थ मुखारि परमार्थ खंचो ? (What is the value of truth before selfishness?) refers to such selfish people.

Thus we can see that the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins always received a general culture and education which is of the highest quality and an education of humanity. This is evident from a close study of the Konkani proverbs. Through these proverbs contain no hard and fast rules, a general education is provided to the members of the society. These proverbs inspire and guide the members on the natural law of action (Karma) which helps them to avoid bad thoughts and clear the mind which is the field of manifestation of these thoughts. They give the message that actions must be based on the universal and the eternal which are not limited to an external standard. The essence

of ideal Purushartha is the harmonising of the four groups of values each in its place and proportion. This idea of balance in the culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins has found expression in a variety of ways. The racial experience through the ages has impressed on their minds that all life and experience consists in the interaction, co-operation and conflict according to circumstances. This can be watched in all spheres, especially ethical and spiritual. The Konkani proverbs disclose this wider field effectively. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins know that life is full of tension because of the opposites. But they are averse to taking sides. This attitude is an inbuilt characteristic of their minds. The philosophy of life prizes the virtues of non-alignment and co-existence in all spheres of activity. For them this world and the other world are both to be cherished simultaneously.

## Conclusion

Proverbs are the mirror of the society through which we may feel the pulse of the particular people with their cultural ethics, their inner-most experiences and immediate values. The Konkani proverbs, along with other cultures, reflect the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin culture also in full with all its aspects, all colours and both in light and shade. Through these proverbs we see scenes of the people especially the folk style, with all its originality without any drawbacks. These proverbs are not a product of one generation. They come to us with many modifications due to their transmission from one generation to another. They are cherished mainly through memory, and due to this many of them are lost along with those who treasured them in their memories. Attempts are made by some scholars to collect and record these proverbs and thereby we are enabled to study them in all their details and aspects.

The culture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins commends a full life based on recognition of the primacy of spirit over mind and instinct. They practised the principle of Dharma. According to them, Dharma in its correct sense, stands above all differences of faith, creed and race, as in the saying from the *Mahabharata* धारणाद् धर्मसित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः, because it supports and holds together everybody who follows it. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins had taken Dharma as that which secures preservation of beings. The main aim of their life is to seek the demonstrated relevance of Dharma in day-to-day living. Their principal object is to promote the habit of thought

and of an identity between thought and action. From time immemorial they had followed these convictions and this is reflected in some of the Konkani proverbs.

The way of life accepted by the Saraswats is of a distinct view. The complexity of customs, standards and ideas which constitute the uniqueness of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community is well-pictured in the Konkani proverbs. They have their own social and cultural setting. Their cultural setting leaves an impression on the individual and the society. This can be felt by the study of the Konkani proverbs. The state of most esoteric knowledge is conveyed to the members of the society, in their day-to-day life. Theirs is a unique type of social structure which is firmly established on the basis of Dharma. Some traces of the Varnashrama Dharma can be seen in this society. The culture of these people is almost inclusive. It believes in वेद शिकूनु भेद करन्हये (After studying the Vedas one must not show discrimination). The Konkani proverbs reflect this philosophy of life clearly.

As an unwritten history of a people, these proverbs depict the culture and civilisation of the Konkani people including the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins, their hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows, fears and frustrations. Different relationships, pleasant and unpleasant found among the members of the society, their religious beliefs, economic conditions, historical facts, are all fully recorded in the Konkani proverbs thus giving a real picture of the society through ages. These proverbs present before us the true picture of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin society, with all types of people, thus providing us with a word about everybody in the society.

The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins tried to integrate all the groups of the society in their social structure. This always revealed interdependence. These were the para communities or groups who occupy an institutional position within the society. Constant repetition of their work created the rhythm of life, a rhythm exposed in a perpetual repetition of the same actions.

The Konkani proverbs also describe the imponderable and subtle aspects of woman's life, her joys and sorrows, her status and roles, her ideals and tensions. All these indicate that the position of a woman in this society is comparatively lower than that of a man. Her rights and authority are restricted to the household only.

The law of Karma is closely followed by the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins. There are a number of proverbs which deal with Karma as well as Karmaphala. The Gowda Saraswat Brahmins believe in जन्मान्तर. The actions of previous births with their results are called Prarabdhas in this birth. Hence the members of this community are warned against bad actions. The proverbs तण्टाणे खोळ्ळले फोडांतु तण्टाणे पोडचे (He who makes a plot against another, himself becomes a victim to it), मीट खेल्लोलो उदाक पित्तोलो (One who eats salt will drink water.) etc. are examples. Most of the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins are particular about their actions that they must be based upon the universal and the eternal which is not limited to an external standard. Whatever we do to others, we do to ourselves as all the jivas form the parts of the Supreme Soul.

Thus the Konkani proverbs show how the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin Community still retain their age-old principles and practices. The proverbs truthfully reflect the background of the community.

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